

THE INDEPENDENT

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(IR45p) 40p

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PEOPLE

Tiger Woods turns Thai



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War of words over childcare

Mothers are key figures for education talk, for talking about homework, for discussing what has gone on in the day

Professor Margaret O'Brien

Glenda Cooper

Children who attend daycare centres have higher IQs and better social skills than those whose mothers do not work, according to a leading child-research institution.

The findings, which encompass eight major studies carried out since the 1960s, contradict research highlighted by the BBC's *Panorama* programme yesterday which claimed that children of working mothers are more likely to fail at school.

That study, carried out by the University of North London, concluded that children whose mothers worked full-time were twice as likely to fail their GCSE examinations as those who worked part-time. The research, concentrating on 600 working-class families in East London, provoked a storm of protest from parents' and women's groups.

But findings by the Institute of Child Health, looking at children entering the school system, showed strong beneficial results for children who received quality childcare. All eight studies showed that IQ was increased and the early cognitive gains prevented later failure at school.

Although the IQ effect became less pronounced as time went on, six



Small beginnings: Children playing yesterday at the Pillar Box Montessori Nursery School in Bow, East London

Photograph: Andrew Buurman

of the trials examined the effect of daycare on later school achievement, including tests in the three Rs. Five out of the six trials showed persistent differences favouring the experimental group.

Children who had daycare were also much better behaved both at home and in class. By the age of 27, five times as many individuals who did not receive pre-school daycare had been arrested on five or more occasions as those who did have daycare.

"In the light of these data, statements about the adverse behavioural effects of daycare can only be interpreted as ideological statements," said Dr Ian Roberts, director of the Child Health Monitoring Unit at the Institute of Child Health, who carried out the overview.

Mothers also benefited when their children had access to daycare. Three out of four trials found that daycare increased maternal paid employment.

In one project all mothers had

comparable education and employment levels beforehand but by the time their children reached four and a half those with pre-school children were less likely to be unemployed or have unskilled jobs and more likely to be financially self-supporting.

"There isn't a scrap of evidence that putting children in daycare while their mothers go to work is bad for their health or education," said Dr Roberts. "On the contrary, the evidence from well-conducted and controlled trials suggests that it's very

good for children." His findings were supported by Colette Kelleher, director of the Daycare Trust, which yesterday reported that only one childcare place exists for every nine children under the age of eight.

"We are aware that quality childcare is what every child should have and it is very positive," said Ms Kelleher. "Daycare needs to be put on the political agenda. It is an issue for any government and is as important as health and education."

But Patricia Morgan, research

fellow at the Institute of Economic Affairs and author of *Who Needs Parents? The Effects of Childcare and Early Education on Children in Britain and the USA* disputed the findings. "These intensive-learning programmes are used on highly disadvantaged children," she said.

"These projects are the sort of thing that responsible middle-class mothers are doing anyway. The best programmes are based on good parenting in the real world. It is no

There isn't a scrap of evidence that putting children in day-care while mothers go to work is bad for health or education

Dr Ian Roberts
Institute of Child Health

The research on which *Panorama* was based reached similar conclusions: "Mothers are key figures for education talk, for talking about homework, for discussing what has gone on in the day," said Professor Margaret O'Brien, who carried out the research. "It appears that for children who are living in households where the mother is working part-time she's around more at that time of day when the children want to talk about these issues."

Another study highlighted in the programme identified "middle-class deprivation" among 100 well-to-do Californian families. Six-year-olds whose mothers worked full or part time did worse in tests than those with stay-at-home mothers.

But Dr Roberts stressed that financial status played a large part in influencing the kind of care children received. "These findings clearly have important implications for equity in education," he said. "Access to high-quality pre-school education is currently rationed on the basis of being able to pay for it. As a result public provision of primary-school education does not provide for equality of educational opportunity, since some children start school with a considerable educational advantage."

Polly Toynbee, page 15

Britain's poorest face losing legal advice

EXCLUSIVE

by Patricia Wynn Davies, Legal Affairs Editor

Some of the poorest and most disadvantaged people would be hit under controversial plans by the Lord Chancellor's Department to abolish the legal aid scheme for criminal cases.

Gary Streeter, the Home Office minister responsible for legal aid, is expected to decide within a fortnight whether to sweep away the "green form" scheme which allows legal advisers to give up to two hours' free advice without authorisation from the Legal Aid Board.

The proposal, which would not require legislation, is understood to have the personal

backing of Mr Streeter, who has championed legal aid reform. Legal campaigners say the move, intended to speed up the legal process, will lead to greater delays and higher costs. Some lawyers have warned that if Mr Streeter presses ahead with abolition rather than amendment of the scheme, he would open himself to the risk of judicial review in the courts.

Moves to introduce the change have been made almost by stealth, with minimal consultation over a few weeks instead of the several months allowed by the department.

A letter from a departmental official last month stated: "Our provisional view... is that we should remove advice on criminal matters from within the scope of the green form scheme." But the letter was sent only to the Law Society, the solicitors' professional body, and not to other welfare, legal and campaigning groups.

The department appears to want things both ways. Some £23.6m was spent on criminal green form advice in 1995-6, involving 377,564 acts of assistance. Yet, said the letter: "We have some difficulty in understanding what it is the green form is being used for that could not and should not be properly covered in other ways."

The Law Society and campaigners from the Legal Action Group say the scheme is essential in two main categories of case: where a person is under investigation by the police and has not yet been charged; and where cases are not serious enough for representation under the full legal aid scheme.

The latter might include those not involving risk of imprisonment, or failure to pay a television licence.

The free advice is often needed while applications for full criminal legal aid, now subject

to rigorous means testing, are being considered.

The move has also come at a time when the Lord Chancellor, Lord Mackay of Clashfern, is warning magistrates to cut down on the number of adjournments. Vicki Chapman, policy officer for the Legal Action Group, said: "More adjournments will be required if preliminary work has not been done or unrepresented litigants have been unable to get advice before arriving at court. Far from speeding things up, this change would cause greater delays and add to costs."

The group has warned that people who couldn't get help under the scheme would now

turn to court or police station duty solicitors, threatening the viability of schemes in some areas. The upshot could be that there are no significant savings.

Under current regulations there is no clear demarcation between work that can be done under various parts of the legal aid scheme. But Russell Wallman, director of policy at the Law Society, said: "Of course, the Government must make sure there is no duplication. That does not call for the scrapping of the scheme in its entirety. The green form scheme exists specifically to give people advice about their legal position in situations where they are not having representation in court."

Clangers open surrogate election campaign

Anthony Bevins
Political Editor

A surrogate general election campaign opened with a display of confusion and fumbling self-contradiction in Wirral South yesterday.

Even before the Government Chief Whip had moved the last-minute Commons writ for a Wirral South by-election on 27 February, Michael Heseltine, the deputy prime minister, had dropped a clanger on his own candidate, saying he expected the Wirral voters to give the Tories a good hiding.

Later, as if to provide political balance, Labour faced both ways on the delicate issue of Wirral grammar schools, saying it would not abolish them but would give parents the right to get rid of them.

Unravelling the latest anti-Labour power in London, Mr Heseltine said: "There are a lot

of people around who see by-elections as an opportunity to kick the Government, and we would expect to see that." One party stalwart in Wirral South yesterday said Mr Heseltine might be of more use "if he kept his big gob shut".

Stephen Dorrell, Secretary of State for Health, the duty Cabinet minister in the constituency yesterday, was more diplomatic: "Mr Heseltine was answering, no doubt, a different question," he said on a walkabout in Heswall, the most prosperous part of the constituency.

Mr Dorrell was less than certain when pressed to give a firm promise that the by-election would not be aborted by a decision to call a snap general election for March, to avoid humiliation in Wirral South and a possible Commons defeat in a confidence vote.

The *Independent* asked Mr Dorrell seven times for a pledge-



that the by-election would be held on 27 February. At the second time of asking, he said: "I, er, there's, er, it's absolutely clear we're moving a by-election writ, er, because we intend there to be a by-election (sic) to be held."

Les Byrom, the Conservative candidate, told *The Independent* he had not got a clue as to whether John Major would pull the plug on his by-election campaign. "We have a by-election to fight and the people of Wirral South are very important in that respect," he said. "But there's also the national interest as well, and I don't know what the Prime Minister has in mind."

John Prescott, Labour's deputy leader, said in the constituency that it would be an "outrage" if Wirral South's voters were offered a by-election, only to have it withdrawn because of a Tory decision that a general election would help cut their losses. Labour's deputy leader also said Mr Heseltine had "thrown in the towel" even before the fight had begun.

But Labour descended into disarray of its own, with candidate Ben Chapman saying local grammar schools were under no

threat of closure "unless, as we have said, the parents choose to change the admissions policy."

"The parents can, if they so wish, have a ballot on the future of the grammar schools," Mr Major today will risk alienating Britain's European partners by taking the British election to Brussels with a warning that the social chapter is a "Trojan Horse" which will destroy jobs. The Prime Minister will use a conference of European businessmen to attack the Social Chapter and Labour's plans to end Britain's opt-out from European regulations.

Federal threat, page 8

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Police re-arrest stepfather of missing schoolgirl

Police investigating the disappearance of the missing schoolgirl Zoe Evans were last night questioning her stepfather in connection with her suspected killing. Detectives arrested Miles Evans, 23, at lunchtime yesterday. Nine-year-old Zoe has been missing for more than three weeks after disappearing from her home on an army base in Wiltshire, on 11 January. Detectives began to fear that she had been killed when they found bloodstained items of her clothing on a railway embankment.

Despite extensive searches by police, soldiers and civilians, Zoe has still not been found. Officers also studied closed-circuit television pictures taken in a Wiltshire shopping centre shortly after Zoe's disappearance showing a girl matching her description walking with a man and a woman.

Shortly after Zoe's disappearance, her mother and stepfather appeared at a televised press conference to appeal for information. Mr Evans was arrested two weeks ago and held for questioning for four days before being released without charge. **Matthew Brace**

Bill monitors abuse case evidence

Suspected rapists and child abusers will be supervised to prevent evidence in their cases from being circulated as pornography in prisons under a new law which has government approval. The Bill, which has been put forward by Robert Hughes, Conservative MP for Harrow West, would prevent defendants from seeing sensitive material unless they are accompanied by a solicitor, prison official or police officer.

There has been concern that details of assaults, including explicit photographs and statements, have been distributed among inmates in prisons. In some child abuse cases, pictures have been swapped among paedophile groups outside the penal system. **Frán Abrams**

Suspected war criminal's illness



Representatives of an alleged war criminal from Surrey whose trial collapsed last month when a jury found him mentally unfit to face charges had not told government law officers that he was suffering from Alzheimer's Disease, the Lord Chancellor, Lord Mackay of Clashfern, said last night. Lord Mackay said at question time: "Attorney General Sir Nicholas Lyell would expect to take account of any available medical evidence when deciding whether to consent to the bringing of proceedings under the War Crimes Act."

In the case of Szymon Serafinowicz, the 86-year-old retired carpenter charged with murdering three Jews on the eastern front, Sir Nicholas "did offer the defendant an opportunity to submit any such evidence". The Lord Chancellor added: "At the time, the Attorney General caused inquiry to be made to those representing the defendant whether there was any medical bar to a prosecution and whether the defendant wished to make representations to the law officers as to his health, mental or physical. But no representations were forthcoming."

Nurses suspended after baby dies

Two nurses have been suspended from duty after a baby girl died in hospital. An internal investigation is now under way at Burnley general hospital in Lancashire into the death of the newborn infant in the neonatal intensive care unit two weeks ago. A separate coroner's investigation is also being carried out and an inquest will be held. Police said they were aware of the investigations, but it is understood that no criminal allegations have been made.

Motorist accused of fatal road rage

A motorist shot dead one man and seriously wounded another in a case of "road rage taken to extreme", a court heard yesterday. Car dealer Lee Gardiner, 25, allegedly warned two terrified witnesses who had watched shootings: "You don't know me. I'm a bad boy. I'm a gangster."

John Bevan, for the prosecution, said: "It was as clear intent to kill as one could imagine." Southwark Crown Court heard that the late-night confrontation occurred in May 1996 after a minor collision between Mr Gardiner's Renault 5 and a Mitsubishi car.

Inmates sought for new boot camp

Prison officials are searching far up in 12 inmates to be sent to the country's second "boot camp" for young offenders which will open this month. The camp, sited in the grounds of the Military Corrective Training Centre at Colchester, will be run by military instructors and offenders will face a tough regime in austere conditions. Inmates who break the rules face being sent back to jail. The camp will eventually house 30 prisoners. **Jason Benetto**

people



Tiger Woods: The best is yet to come, say golfing pundits Photograph: Empics

The man people say will be the black Jack Nicklaus

Thai governments are rarely accused of not being pragmatic, or to put it another way, opportunistic. This helps explain why Tiger Woods, the new wunderkind of the international golf circuit, is being claimed as one of Thailand's own.

Woods is nothing short of a phenomenon. His career would be incredible even if it were not for the fact that he is black, still a rare thing on the highly conservative international golf circuit. In short, he has taken his sport by storm since turning professional last year and the pundits are predicting remarkable things. He will soon become as potent a symbol of black achievement, they say, as Muhammad Ali or Michael Jordan. He will be the black Jack Nicklaus.

In Thailand, excitement is rapidly reaching fever pitch, in anticipation of Woods's arrival today. Why? Because the American, whose mother is Thai, will be offered Thai citizenship and a royal honour at a ceremony attended by the usual circus of publicity seeking politicians.

"Fact is," wrote a Thai columnist, "we Thais absolutely adore anyone who is rich and famous - and when the rich and famous can throw in a bit of Thai-ness as well, then it's certainly time to break out the flags and get really carried away."

The problem, however, is that the offer of citizenship to Woods has only succeeded in highlighting Thailand's archaic and highly discriminatory laws relating to children of mixed marriages and the difficulties non-Thais have in acquiring citizenship.

Bottom of the pile are the children of Thai women married to foreigners, even if, unlike Woods, who does not speak Thai, they live in Thailand. These children are deprived of most civic rights and cannot, for example, own land.

Although Tiger Woods is well respected, the offer of citizenship is raising eyebrows because it is clear that he is essentially an American, whereas many Thai residents have a much stronger claim to citizenship but have no hope of acquiring it. Tida Woods, Tiger's mother, has been doing her best to demonstrate that her son has some Thai influences in his life. She says he was brought up as a Buddhist and, like many Thais, wears a Buddhist amulet round his neck.

However, Woods may not be able to avail himself of the honour because the US frowns on dual nationality. He will have less trouble accepting the \$500,000 appearance fee for joining a golf tournament in one of Thailand's many luxurious golf clubs this week.

Stephen Vines - Bangkok

Bosnia veteran takes over as Army chief

General Sir Roger Wheeler, the son of a distinguished Army general, took over as the new head of the Army yesterday.

Gen Wheeler, who was Commander-in-Chief Land Command, replaced General Sir Charles Guthrie, who is to become Chief of the Defence Staff.

Gen Wheeler, 55, was selected as the new Chief of the General Staff from a strong list of contenders, including General Sir Michael Rose, who is currently Adjutant General and will now retire in the summer.

The former SAS commander became a household name when he commanded United Nations forces in Bosnia in a high-profile 12-month operation.

Gen Wheeler was commissioned into his father's regiment, the Royal Ulster Rifles, in 1964.

His early military career saw service in Borneo and the Middle East. He served as a brigade major during the 1974 Cyprus emergency and was a member of Lord



Gen Wheeler: Distinguished

Carver's staff during the 1977 Rhodesia talks.

He later commanded British forces in Northern Ireland between 1993 and 1996, and was Commander of the 1st Armoured Division on the Rhine between 1989 and 1990.

Gen Wheeler lists his interests as fly-fishing, cricket and shooting. Not surprisingly, he belongs to the Army and Navy Club.

Women, 50, gives birth to triplets

A 50-year-old woman has become the country's oldest mother of triplets in what is described by her gynaecologist as "the chance of the century".

Sue Green from Peterborough, Cambridgeshire gave birth to triplets Oliver, Aaron, and Samuel, on 8 November last year, nine weeks early. The multiple birth makes Mrs Green the second oldest mother of triplets in the world, after a 57-year-old Italian woman who gave birth in 1994.

Mrs Green and her husband Steve, 29, paid £4,500 for private in vitro fertilisation treatment after the NHS said she was too old to be helped. She already has five children from a previous relationship of whom the oldest is 30.

She had three embryos implanted last April and within two weeks discovered she was expecting triplets. "I laughed my socks off - I was thrilled," she told the Sun.

"I may be 50 but I feel no different from when I had my first child 30 years ago. I am full of life and was determined to prove the doctors wrong."

Glenda Cooper

briefing

CIVIL LIBERTIES

Benefit crackdown Bill may compromise rights

Plans for the pooling of information by Government departments to crack down on social security fraud could violate the European Convention on Human Rights, two barristers have warned in a legal opinion. The opinion, drawn up by Richard Drabble QC and Dinah Rose for Liberty, the civil rights organisation, advises of a "substantial risk" that the Social Security Administration (Fraud) Bill would breach Article 8, which guarantees the right to respect for private life and correspondence, because of the breadth of the discretion in the Bill and the lack of safeguards for the prevention of abuse.

The Bill would allow the Inland Revenue and Customs to pass information on individuals for use in the prevention, detection, investigation or prosecution of social security offences. Other Government departments would be allowed to pass information on immigration matters or "any other matter which is prescribed" to the Department of Social Security, while the department will be permitted to pass information to councils administering housing or council tax benefit. **Patricia Wynn Davies**

SHOPPING

Threat to supermarket supremacy

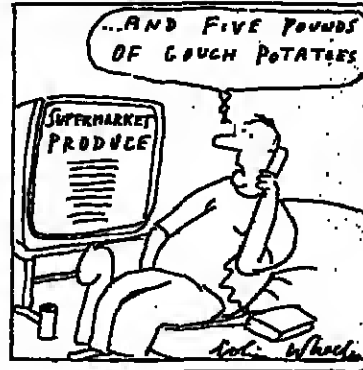
The weekly visit to the local supermarket could soon be a thing of the past, according to a shopping survey by property consultants Healey & Baker. It forecasts a growth of the "doorstep delivery" market to around £8.5bn, with 20 per cent of the population buying their groceries through home shopping services or "drive-thru" operations.

The study suggests that shoppers value choice and convenience above price. Almost half those surveyed said they did not choose to shop in the stores they believed offered the lowest prices.

Tesco is already running an Internet shopping trial in West London and is extending the service to five new areas. Sainsbury's is running an "Order & Collect" service at its Watford store, where customers phone through their order then drop by the store to collect it.

According to the report, 21 per cent of shoppers would be interested in a home delivery service and 11 per cent in an "order and collect" system.

Where People Shop 1997, Healey & Baker. Tel: 0171 514 2112. **Nigel Cope**



EDUCATION

Students missing out on training

Thousands of potential students with disabilities or learning difficulties are missing out on education and job training because colleges lack the resources to provide for them. A study of provision for students with special needs in 460 further education colleges in England claimed their numbers could be double the 1996 figure of 126,000 if all demand was met.

The Mapping Provision study, by the Institute of Employment Studies, also found almost a third of colleges admitted they could not cater for all the special needs of existing students. Lack of trained staff and inadequate resources again look most of the blame.

Mapping Provision, £13.95, the Stationery Office, PO Box 276, London, SW8 5DT. Tel: 0171-873 9090. **Lucy Ward**

CHARITIES

Donations stagnant since Lottery

Complaints that the National Lottery has adversely affected the finances of British charities are likely to be revived with the publication of a report showing that the level of public donations has stagnated since its inception.

According to the Barclays/NGO Charity 100 Index of leading charities, total incomes rose by an average of just 0.7 per cent between October 1995 and October 1996. However, between January 1992 and January 1995, charity incomes had rapidly outstripped the Retail Price Index, with an average year-on-year increase of 8.75 per cent.

The index tracks a variety of sources of income, not all of which can be affected by the lottery. Nevertheless, fund-raising managers are likely to be alarmed by the analysis, published in the magazine *NGO Finance*.

ECONOMICS

South East leads productivity

Britons created £594bn of wealth, or an average of £10,137 for each individual, according to economic figures for 1995 released by the Government yesterday.

The gross domestic product (GDP) figures, published by the Office for National Statistics, showed the South East was the most productive region - with 31 per cent of the total population it accounted for 35 per cent of the nation's wealth.

London had the highest GDP per head in the UK at £12,500. By contrast, the rate per head for Wales was £8,440 and for Northern Ireland it was £8,410. Outside the South East, East Anglia was the only region to exceed the £10,000 mark - with £10,226.



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All you need is a luvvie

Under Blair's new scheme stars will use their millions to help young hopefuls

David Lister
Arts News Editor

Showbusiness millionaires are giving a mixed reception to a Labour Party plan to help fund young performers with earnings from their royalties.

Paul McCartney, Mick Jagger, Elton John, Sir Andrew Lloyd Webber and Sir Cameron Mackintosh are among the millionaires that Labour is wooing for a radical scheme to help finance the arts.

The scheme announced yesterday by Tony Blair would involve the establishment of a new National Endowment for Science and the Arts (Nesta) to which successful artists and inventors would donate or bequeath copyrights or patent royalties to generate money for a new generation of creative talent.

There are likely to be tax inducements for donors. The scheme would not be compulsory.

By last night, however, there was a dearth of firm pledges to support what is one of the key planks of the party's arts policy.

Sir Cameron Mackintosh, a name definitely on the list of people the Labour arts team would like to contribute to the Nesta funds, ruled out leaving money to Labour's new endowment scheme.

He said he would leave royalties

As well as the big megastars there would be small endowments

from his shows, which include *Miss Saigon* and *Les Misérables*, to the Cameron Mackintosh Foundation, the charitable foundation that he has set up.

He added that he has always voted Conservative in the past, but said yesterday he did not know yet how he would vote at the next election.

A spokesman for Sir Andrew Lloyd Webber said Sir Andrew had not been approached about the scheme.

Mick Jagger also said he was unaware of any approach and knew nothing of the scheme. He would not be drawn on whether he would give money to such an endowment.

However, Sir Paul McCartney and Elton John are understood to have shown some interest. Labour Party sources claimed they had been supportive.

Sir Paul was not available for comment yesterday, but he is thought to have been particularly impressed with the argument



Money for art's sake: Lord Attenborough greeting Jeremy Isaacs yesterday at the Mansion House where Labour launched its proposals

Photograph: Brian Harris

that by leaving royalties from a particular recording to the fund, he could be sure that the profits from his work would remain in the country and fund talented young people.

A spokesman for Elton John said the singer gave the royalties from his singles to the Elton John AIDS Foundation, but he was very supportive of new British talent both in music and in fashion. Labour sources are confident that the singer will support Nesta.

The key people behind the new policy are film producer Sir David Puttnam, an adviser to Labour's arts team, and John Newbigin, a former adviser to Neil Kinnock, who now works at Sir David's company Enigma Productions.

Mr Newbigin said yesterday: "If this scheme had been up and running 20 years ago The Beatles might not have sold their copyrights to Michael Jackson."

"But as well as the big megastars there would be small endowments. We are a world leader in fashion, design, music, advertising, and product design.

We would envisage hundreds of these endowments being set up."

The Labour arts team is understood to be exploring ways to make the endowments "tax efficient" so there would be an incentive, in addition to altruism, to encourage successful artists to give money.

It may have seemed just as odd to leave land to the National Trust

Sir David Puttnam said yesterday: "I would be very disappointed if we couldn't get a trust fund that would generate £100m a year of investment income."

The money, he said, would be invested in people, in Britain's future.

Asked if he had in mind Sir Andrew Lloyd Webber, perhaps, bequeathing in his will the royalties from one of his mu-

sicals, Sir David replied: "That would be a very good example."

And he added: "The National Trust is the largest membership organisation in the world. It has done an extraordinary job in promoting the physical heritage."

"We have another heritage, intellectual property rights of all sorts, from music to design. At present intellectual copyrights bring in \$50bn (£1bn) a year and that figure is growing by 15 per cent per annum."

The scheme was condemned yesterday by the Secretary of State for National Heritage, Virginia Bottomley, who said: "This luvvie's charter confirms my worst fears."

"This Labour scheme for a political-correct Lottery will be at the expense of communities up and down the country."

Admitting it was an unusual idea, Sir David Puttnam said yesterday: "It must have seemed just as odd a suggestion to leave your land and buildings to the nation when the National Trust was set up."

How the trust would work

Nesta, the Labour Party's National Endowment for Science and the Arts, is designed to encourage successful performers, designers, inventors and artists to give or bequeath money to an endowment fund to help finance young talent. Tax inducements are being explored. A tranche of lottery money would also be used to swell the fund.

The Labour leader, Tony Blair, said yesterday: "I believe we must approach the promotion of excellence in a more structured way. That is why we want to create a National Endowment for Science and the Arts to invest in new talent and promote public understanding of the arts,

science and technology. It would work through existing organisations, both public sector and voluntary, to identify the talent of tomorrow, and provide the support that is so important to help it flourish."

"The endowment would be launched with tranches of lottery funds after the millennium, and be built up with gifts or assignments of copyrights and patent royalties to support the next generation, in the same way the National Trust encourages endowments of land and property. Nesta will therefore be self-financing... a 21st century National Trust for talent in Britain, backing human capital rather than buildings."

The money men



Sir Andrew Lloyd Webber: The Sunday Times' 500 richest people in Britain ranks him 22nd with £550m



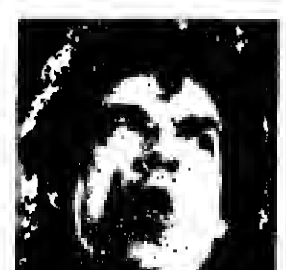
Sir Paul McCartney: Ranked 30th, has a fortune estimated at £420m. His company, MPL, is worth £100m



Sir Cameron Mackintosh: Ranked at 55, is said to be worth £250m. Les Misérables alone has brought in £600m



Elton John: Ranked 115th, is worth some £140m with musical copyrights of more than £70m



Mick Jagger: Ranked 145th, worth £110m and said to study the stock market between gigs

'Miracle cure' man jailed for 21 years

An epileptic who counted cash out of a church congregation by duping them into believing he was brain damaged and confined to a wheelchair, then faked a miracle cure during a service, was jailed for 21 months yesterday.

Birmingham Crown Court had heard that Paul Redhead, 29, from Coventry, staged the "Lazarus re-enactment" to show how foolish Christians were after becoming bored with having to use a wheelchair.

The hoax was dreamed up by Redhead and his flatmate Peter Callister, 24, who was jailed for 15 months, when the epileptic was given a temporary wheelchair after suffering side effects from his medication which left him with a lack of balance.

The chair was integral to the scam as the pair embarked on the charade that Redhead had been brain damaged since birth after being starved of oxygen.

In August 1995 the pair began attending the Elm Pentecostal Church in Coventry. The congregation was fooled into believing that Redhead was severely disabled. After hearing of a "miracle" in which £116 intended for a new wheelchair was supposed to have been stolen, the congregation and a number of local businesses began fundraising and opened a charity bank account.

Last February, fearing the scam was getting out of hand, the pair staged Redhead's "cure". The church's attempts to seek medical verification led to Redhead's downfall. When confronted, Redhead admitted it had been a con and in a tirade against religion claimed he had done it to prove how "foolish and glibble Christians were".

Red faces as Uefa admits World Cup backing for Germany

Steve Beggan

There was embarrassment yesterday at the headquarters of Uefa - European football's governing body - as officials admitted that Germany's bid to stage the World Cup in 2006 had been supported, ahead of an English claim, without formal nomination, discussion, voting or competition.

However, Uefa officials insisted that nothing underhand had happened and that support for Germany was forthcoming only because it was believed no other European country planned to make a bid.

The admission added weight to the Football Association's claims that it had been "stitched up" over Uefa's intention not to consider an English bid.

John Major threw his weight behind the FA's cause, saying an English World Cup could be executed with skill and style. "The last time we played Germany, we lost on penalties," he said. "It was an extremely good game. We were very unlucky to lose. Whether we will lose as far as 2006 is concerned is a long way away." The Prime Minister offered the Government's full support and assigned Iain Sprouat, the Sports Minister, to co-ordinate the bid.

Uefa wrote to the FA last night asking for a meeting but it seems unlikely it will withdraw its support for Germany.

Although some newspapers have made much of the influence within Uefa of two Germans, Gerhardt Aigner, the general secretary, and Egidius



Bert Millichip: Would have been aware of the situation

Braun, vice-president of Uefa's executive committee, the current problems appear to have been caused more by an appalling lack of communication than of double-dealing.

"There are only five countries in Europe capable of hosting the World Cup but three had hosted it too recently and, when we were discussing it, England was tied up with Euro 96," said Fritz Ahlstrom, Uefa's media director. "Germany submitted a formal bid to FIFA [the world football governing body] on 1 June 1993, and from that moment onwards, everyone simply assumed that was the only bid."

"Certainly, England never said they were making a bid - we have still not received any formal notification that they plan to. Uefa's official support for Germany is not recorded in any minutes - we have checked

but we ask people to believe us that it was discussed at executive committee meetings and it was taken for granted that Germany was the only bid."

"It was never on the agenda because there was nothing to vote on - there was only one country as far as we knew - so it was not mentioned."

Uefa said England's representative, Sir Bert Millichip, former chairman of the FA, was present and would have been aware of the situation. Sir Bert refused to comment yesterday.

Mr Ahlstrom said Sir Bert and Graham Kelly, chief executive of the FA, were party to a decision in Portugal last year in which Uefa suggested to FIFA that only one candidate from each of the four footballing continents should be considered as World Cup hosts. At the time, he said, it was "generally accepted" that Germany was the only European bidder, and Sir Bert knew that.

Similarly, Uefa's claim not to know of England's intention to bid was rejected by the FA. David Davies, the FA spokesman, said FIFA was told last October that an English bid would be forthcoming. And he said the FA had a video, taken in November, showing Mr Braun, making a speech in which he said he looked forward to the "friendly rivalry" between England and Germany over hosting the World Cup.

FIFA said yesterday that Uefa's decision would have no bearing on its choice and that there was nothing to stop any member making a bid.

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news

Boy drivers saved from blazing car

James Cusick

Two stepbrothers aged 12 and eight were pulled from a blazing car by police early yesterday after a joyride which ended with the vehicle smashing into a pub after being driven the wrong way along a dual carriageway.

The two officers who risked their own lives pulling the two boys to safety were praised for their bravery by their boss. Superintendent Phil Hollowood, of Greater Manchester Police, said that the selfless action of Constables Simon Waddington and Jackie Pendlebury had probably saved the boys' lives.

According to police, the 12-year-old had been at the wheel of the stolen Vauxhall Cavalier as it was driven around Manchester and Salford in the early hours of yesterday morning. The police officers, who were on patrol in a Transit van, spotted the car near a shopping precinct in Salford at 3.40am.

The police Transit pursued the joyriders with its siren switched on and its lights flashing. However, instead of stopping the stolen vehicle accelerated away and headed down a dual carriageway - going in the direction of on-coming traffic.

As the chase continued the boy-driver lost control and the car

Stepbrothers, aged 12 and 8, crashed vehicle into public house

smashed into the wall of a derelict public house in Salford before bursting into flames.

Supt Hollowood, said that the officers smashed a side window to break into the car "despite the considerable risk to them", and pulled the two boys away from the flames.

He added: "Their prompt and very brave action may have prevented more serious injuries and quite possibly saved the boys' lives."

Both boys were taken to the Royal Manchester Children's Hospital. The 12-year-driver was allowed home after receiving treatment for shock and minor cuts.

However, his stepbrother, who had been sitting in the front passenger seat during the chase, is still in hospital being treated for back and other internal injuries. His condition was described as "stable but serious".

Under-age joyriding is now re-

garded by police as an almost established criminal problem. Although teenage joyriding in cities like Belfast is well documented, some inner-city housing estates in areas of mainland Britain have also become arenas for regular joyriding by youngsters.

The problem of joyriding and other car-related acts now accounts for 1.3 million recorded crimes annually. Vehicle crime, on average, has risen by 5 per cent since 1985.

Greater Manchester Police said the circumstances of the joyride, the police chase and the crash, were being fully investigated by an officer from another police force as "standard procedure".

The car is understood to have been stolen in Stretford, Greater Manchester, on Saturday. Police believe it may have been used in a crime in Prestwich, Manchester, and later abandoned somewhere. The two boys may have found it, entered and driven off, sometime early yesterday morning.

Speaking about the incident that could have cost his two sons, their father said they must have sneaked out of the house at 3am.

"I don't know how they managed to start the car. They've never done anything like this before," he said.



Shut down: Hammersmith Bridge yesterday after its controversial closure for repairs. The fears of motoring organisations of huge traffic jams around the bridge in west London, which was used daily by 30,000 vehicles, did not materialise. Photograph: Nicola Hunt



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Militant men declare war on 'social evil' of feminism

Barrie Clement
Labour Editor

An organisation for militant males - denounced as a group of "sad misogynists" by its critics - is bombarding the Equal Opportunities Commission with complaints about the treatment of men.

A group of activists belonging to the United Kingdom Men's Movement is intent on "gunning up the works", according to commission officials.

The movement is fighting feminism which it regards as "the greatest social evil of our time" and calling for the abolition of the commission and the repeal of equal rights legislation.

Members of the Men's Movement have embarked on a campaign to inundate the commission with calls urging action over a series of alleged injustices which serve to undermine the role of men.

Officials at the commission are frustrated by the onslaught because some of the complaints have substance. However, officials are also aware of the organisation's aim to destroy the commission.

"There might come a stage when the public service requirement - whereby the commission is duty-bound to respond in detail to inquiries - becomes ridiculous," said one source close to the commission.

The Men's Movement's latest broadside against "political correctness" came yesterday when it attacked a decision to abolish the lower height limit for firefighters in Northern Ireland because it amounted to indirect discrimination against women.

The commission had pointed out that more women were

below the height of 5ft 6in than men.

The men's group yesterday issued a statement pointing out that the maximum height requirement of 6ft 4in discriminated against men because there were more of them above that height.

George McAuley, of the Men's Movement, yesterday argued that height was an important ingredient in assessing whether someone was capable of doing the job.

He said his organisation, of which he is Scottish chairman, formed the "shock troops in the campaign for men's equality". He contended that men suffered discrimination over employment, pensions and divorce. Unmarried fathers had few rights as far as their

There might come a stage when the duty to respond is ridiculous

children were concerned, he said.

Critics of the Men's Movement, which is funded by a claimed membership of "a couple of thousand", argue that its membership varies from intelligent, rational individuals to "nasty people with chips on their shoulders".

Some members have allegedly been abusive on the telephone to officials at the commission and have been told that their inquiries and communications will only be dealt with by letter.

DAILY POEM

THE POX IN ROSELAND
by Norman Jope

The poppies multiply as wasps get larger.
Wheatfields lose their boundaries. The houses ripen.
Free papers move across the seeded mudplots.
Dashing out what brains they have on polished fences.
As the Datsuns, Vauxhalls, Fords, Toyotas, Ladas, Audis
Grind into the drives. Keys turn, to prise
A pinnied kiss, a six-cal mini-supper and a night of
Sitcoms. A freight train goesesteps over clayey
Sub-soils. The single village pub is filled with brags
Concerning dividends and food in baskets. The poppies
Wave. The wasps fake honeycombs. The bees
Have almost burst with pollen - are obese, asthmatic -
And they humbly heavily. A circle swells
In ripening corn, a mile into the fields.
That no-one sees. The shadow of the trolleys
On the local drive-in Sainsbury's reads
Mene, Mene... And he tells her
It is over, that the figures will not balance
And that chaos theory slaughters economics.
Beyond their walls, the poppies drink
The stings of wasps, dream death in shocks of violet.

This poem comes from Norman Jope's first collection, *For the Wedding Guest* (published by Stride). Priced £6.95, it is available, post free, from Stride Publications, 11 Sylvan Road, Exeter, Devon EX4 6EW.

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Michael Streeter

BBC warn
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'At sea with 2,500 men, the majority sexually harassing you...'



Making waves: Lesley Morris at home after being forced to quit the Wrens where she claims she was bullied and sexually harassed

Photographs Don McPhee

Wren attempted suicide after humiliation from male colleagues while serving in the navy

A former Wren attempted suicide after suffering "horrific" sexual harassment while serving in the Navy, an industrial tribunal was told yesterday.

Lesley Morris, 23, of Shepton Mallet, Somerset, is claiming constructive dismissal after she took a paracetamol overdose and was then discharged from the service as "temperamentally unsuitable" in May 1995.

Miss Morris told the Manchester tribunal that she had been forced to mimic oral sex in front of a group of men, including an officer.

She said that during four years serving in the Navy she had her breasts grabbed and was

bullied, adding: "It broke my heart to leave the Navy. It was all I ever wanted to do but I knew I had to."

Miss Morris, whose brother still serves in the Navy, says the male sailors constantly insulted the Wrens, calling them "sluts, slags, splits - short for split arses - and turtles".

Her ambition was to become a physical training instructor and she went to HMS Raleigh in Torpoint, Cornwall, for training. "I was the only woman in the gym and I was given impossible tasks to do," she told the tribunal. She added: "As punishment, I was made to jump in the swimming pool in my white uniform, which became transparent when wet."

She claimed that on three occasions her breasts were grabbed by a leading physical training instructor in front of other sailors. She was also forced to stand on a table and mime a woman giving a man oral sex. "I felt totally humiliated and was shaking like a leaf afterwards," Miss Morris told the tribunal.

She added: "I lost my confidence and I thought, why doesn't anyone stop this?"

Miss Morris said she did not complain formally because her life would have been made

doubly worse by the male sailors, but she did inform some of her immediate superiors about what she was going through. "All the Wrens were affected and sometimes we

were even terrified to go into the dining room for dinner because of the constant taunts."

Miss Morris, who was suffering gynaecological problems at the time, said she tried to

commit suicide by swallowing a bottle of paracetamol after she had become depressed.

When asked by Roger Green, representing the Ministry of Defence, if she had not enjoyed naval life, Miss Morris replied: "I loved the Navy. I would never say anything against naval life. But when you are at sea with 1,200 men and the majority of them are sexually harassing you, that is not a good situation for a young girl."

"Every single day there were two or three insulting remarks."

She said that one officer had told her it would take 15 years for the Wrens to be accepted in the Navy.

The hearing continues.



Lesley Morris during her service days as a Wren

Football trial told of links with betting syndicate

Michael Streeter

A businessman said to be the representative of a Far Eastern syndicate betting on the outcome of "fixed" Premier League games received information on soccer matches from well-known footballers, a court was told yesterday.

Heng Suan Lim, 31, one of four defendants in the football match-rigging trial, said the informants were John Fashanu, Bruce Grobbelaar and Hans Segers - his co-accused - and Mr Fashanu's business associate Glyn Mason.

Asked by his counsel, Jerome Lynch who he would call with the information, Mr Lim said it was Johannes Josef or one of his close friends in Indonesia.

Mr Lim, from north London, was giving evidence at Winchester Crown Court where he and the three footballers deny being involved in fixing football matches for an Indonesian betting syndicate. He was quizzed about his relationship with Mr Josef, who by 1989 was paying him £1,000 a month. Mr Josef said to have been the paymaster for the fixing of matches.

Mr Josef, a family friend who he called "uncle", suggested that he could give him information on football in

England. Mr Lim agreed to provide information. There was no agreement for additional payments, but if Mr Josef made money on the forecasts he said he could send him extra cash.

Mr Lim said numbers he had written in a Football League handbook against First Division teams in 1992 were a handicap system used in forecasting. These were based on odds from bookmakers and current form. He would discuss his predictions when Mr Josef telephoned from Indonesia. Sometimes he would advise against betting on a particular game because of better information he had received.

Mr Lim also said he had received two letters in 1987 from a Mr Ong in Malaysia, one of which asked him to mix with a team he thought was "possible". It went on: "Before doing anything, don't make any promises to the players, just make friends and talk about football, and you must be careful."

Asked what it meant, Mr Lim, who was born in Malaysia and came to Britain in 1986, said it meant he was to mix with players and get "inside information". Asked if he thought this meant anything illegal Mr Lim replied: "Absolutely not."

The trial continues.

BBC warned on news shake-up

Louise Jury

The BBC was urged yesterday not to jeopardise its pre-eminent position in newsgathering and current affairs when it undertakes a major review of coverage this summer.

Tim Gardam, the former head of BBC news and current affairs and now in charge of news for the launch next month of Channel 5 next month, said the corporation had a certain "brand stamp" and risked alienating its audience if it abandoned that identity.

"I think they should be confident in what they are doing. British television news is very good. There are high standards - much better than anything in the rest of Europe," he said.

While at the BBC, he had suggested a move away from traditional news coverage by dropping "talking-head" politicians and "relating the agenda of politics and power to people's real lives". He said: "I am wry-

ly amused that with Channel 5 now coming on the horizon, they are suddenly hurrying to replicate us."

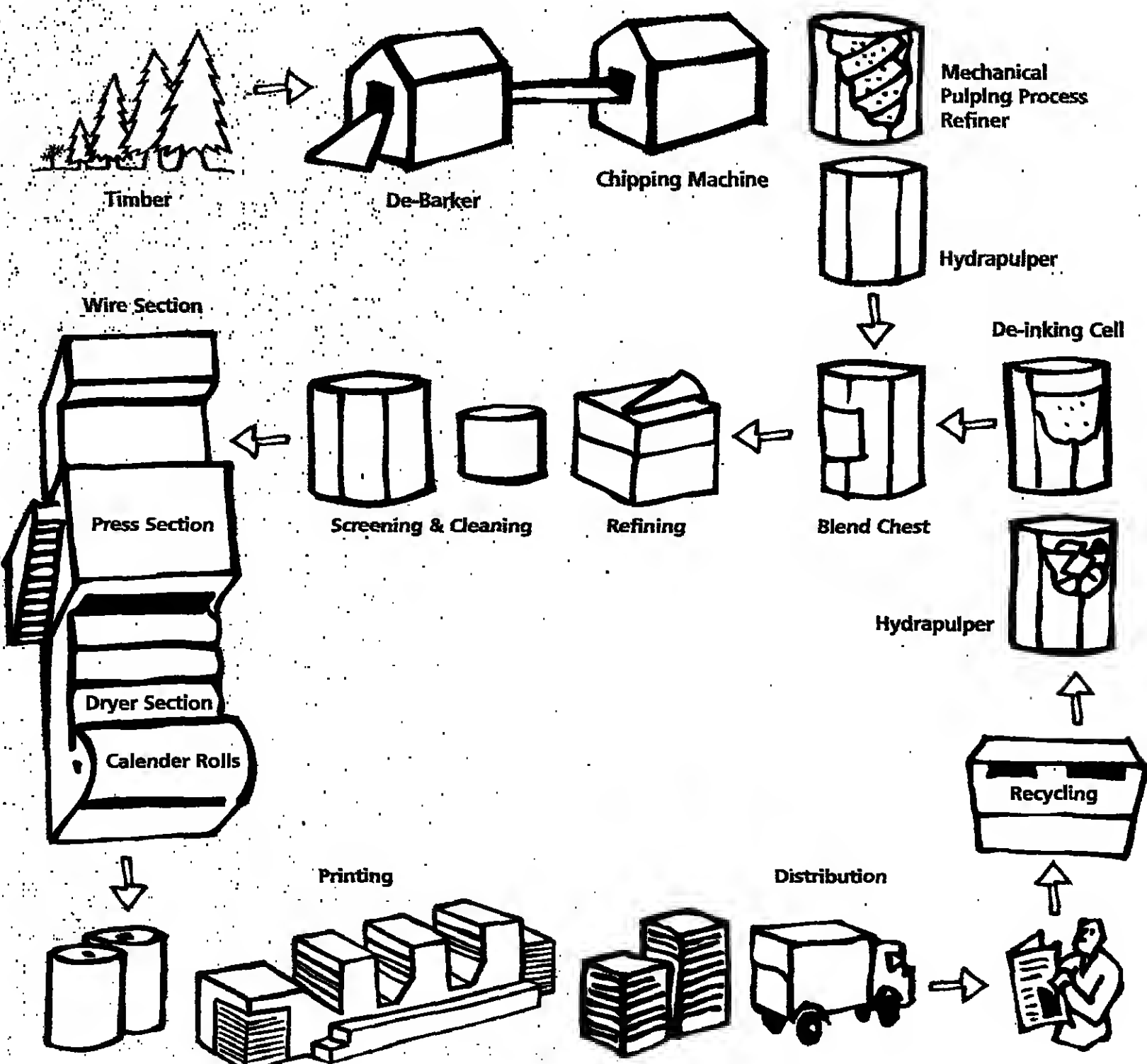
Jonny Hall, chief executive of BBC News, has ordered the first complete review of coverage in 10 years to prepare the corporation for increasingly tough competition from media rivals.

He has declared no programme - from the Six O'Clock News to Radio 4's Today - sacrosanct.

The analysis will begin after the general election, with findings expected to be available by the autumn. BBC news chiefs hope to identify ways of reaching those, such as young people, who do not watch much of the current programming.

A spokesman said: "We want to understand our audiences better. We're entering a highly competitive period, not only in news but in other genres. We're up against strong opposition. We have to make sure we are reaching the wide range of audiences that exist."

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politics

Tories reject the TV challenge

Colin Brown
Chief Political Correspondent

Conservative strategists have ruled out a television debate between John Major and Tony Blair in the run-up to the general election.

Senior Tory party sources said there had never been enthusiasm at Conservative Central Office for the idea of the debate, to which Mr Blair chal-

lenged the Prime Minister "at any time, at any place".

Some Tory strategists believe the debate would be a "no win" platform for Mr Major, giving the Labour leader an equal footing in a head-to-head confrontation, with the risk that it would give the appearance of the Prime Minister on the ropes in defending the Government's record.

The Tory campaign planners

are focusing on the personality of the Prime Minister to "sell" their message, but they are resisting the suggestion that the election campaign will be presidential in style.

They insist it will be no more presidential than past clashes between Margaret Thatcher and Neil Kinnock, and Mr Kinnock with Mr Major, although this time the personality differences may be needed to un-

derscore the differences between the parties.

The campaign mounted yesterday, featuring the patriotic lion shedding a red tear, followed intensive Tory discussions about whether or not they should run an overtly Euro-sceptic campaign.

The party's advertising agents urged them to do so, but Brian Mawhinney, the party chairman, and Michael Heseltine, the

Deputy Prime Minister, were worried about the risk of alienating their own pro-European MPs. They insisted the lion symbol was not Euro-sceptic but anti-Labour.

One Labour source said: "The red tear isn't very noticeable, so we have no complaint about the association between Labour on the poster and the lion. It suggests a Labour government would be strong."

The Tories will focus on tax: "We will be connecting spending to taxation, showing how much more they would spend, with the consequence that taxes would go up," said a Tory source.

Labour have rebutted the allegations that they are planning to raise spending, with the Shadow Chancellor, Gordon Brown, ruling out any increase in spending for the next two years.

DAVID
Aaronovitch

Tripping along the corridors of power

For some strange parliamentary reason, when a "writ" is needed, a "writ" is "moved". Well, yesterday, the writ failed to move for me. The business of beginning the Wirral South election had taken place in the twenty seconds between "prayers" and the beginning of business. And - at that precise moment - I was lying on the pavement outside Victoria station.

I had not fallen victim to London's soaring crime rate, nor yet was I attempting to supplement my income with a spot of eloquent begging ("Wittgenstein discussed for a pound"). I had tripped in my hurry to get to the House, and there was a momentary hiatus between the fall and the resurrection (assisted by a man who cannot have been a day under 90). As I lay there, contemplating London from an unaccustomed vantage point, a weird fantasy took hold. It was that all the MPs that I look down upon day after day - and at whose expense I am myself - were now looking down on me. Lady Olga Maitland had noted my inelegant pose; Denis MacShane my pained expression; John Marshall my ridiculous inability to rise. Jacques "buzz-saw" Arnold took photographs.

Limping back to the Commons I reflected on how very different the same world looks from other viewpoints. Was there, for instance, something that Noel Gallagher knew that I didn't about MPs? Was it the Oasis man's acquaintance with drug-taking that informed his comments that "there's people in Parliament who are bigger heroine and cocaine addicts than anyone"? Had he spotted telltale signs that the rest of us had missed?

Perhaps there are indeed corridors in the Palace where you have to pick your way gingerly between the discarded hypodermics, or men's loos just off the lobby where loud sniffling can be heard, or even expensive habits that are funded by little constituency bungs on Friday nights. Evidence could be well hidden.

But behaviour is hard to suppress; there would be shits. Pupils might be dilated, speech impaired and judgement erratic. National Heritage questions - being less inhibited than, say, questions to the Chancellor - seemed an ideal opportunity to screen our representatives for substance abuse.

So what is Virginia Bottomley on? Judging by her laid-back catinness with the bronzed Dr Jack Cunningham ("He looks refreshed from finding things out in different parts of the world"), opium tea, as shared by Victorian ladies, suggests itself.

At the other end of the spectrum - as Virginia Bottomley on? Judging by her laid-back catinness with the bronzed Dr Jack Cunningham ("He looks refreshed from finding things out in different parts of the world"), opium tea, as shared by Victorian ladies, suggests itself.

Blair's busy day: Hard Labour for New Labour - with Old Labour memories



Top, Tony Blair arriving at the Methodist Central Hall in Westminster yesterday morning for the launch of NCH Action for Children's Youth 2000 campaign to end youth homelessness. Right, addressing the British Screen Advisory Council at the Mansion House, watched by Lord Attenborough, Roger Cork, the Lord Mayor, Lady Mary Wilson, Michael Deeley, deputy chairman of the council and Lady Falkender. Below, being interviewed at the Mansion House watched by his press secretary Alastair Campbell. Left, with Lord Attenborough

Photograph: Brian Harris



Broader horizons for mandarins

Christian Wolmar
Westminster Correspondent

The top 500 civil servants should spend at least three months working outside Whitehall in order to broaden their experience, a report published yesterday recommended.

It says that most of these secondments should be with private sector companies and should be part of a much wider interchange between the sectors.

The report - prepared by a committee headed by Sir Bryan Nicholson, chairman of Bupa,

and endorsed by the Deputy Prime Minister, Michael Heseltine - is an attempt to bring about a fusion of cultures between the private sector and the Civil Service.

Mr Heseltine sees benefits in a greater number of secondments between the two sectors. He said yesterday: "While people in the private sector tend to be more numerate and quicker in making decisions... the strength of the public sector includes strategic appraisal, long-term judgements and good analytical skills."

The report sets out an action programme to ensure that the number of attachments begins to rise again after remaining around the same level for the past five years. Currently, about 400 civil servants each year go into industry for periods of more than one month, and 280 people in the private sector are seconded to the Civil Service. However, these attachments are largely confined to three departments: the Ministry of Defence, the Treasury and the Department of Trade and Industry. Overall, including sec-

ondments in voluntary organisations and European and international bodies, there were 1,314 last year and the number peaked in 1994 at 1,671.

Sir Bryan's committee found that until now there has been a lack of focus about the programme of interchanges and he wants each government department to set up targets for the number of attachments. The committee also wants more junior civil servants and those based outside London to get the chance to work in the private sector or on other attachments.

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Take a pew minister, but not all sixteen



Stephen Goodwin
Heritage Correspondent

**'Living' church
fights for seats
taken from
'dead' parish**

Parishioners in a quiet Lincolnshire village are enraged after being ordered to return a set of 16 wooden pews to a "dead" church from which they were borrowed. They claim their church is well-used, with a growing congregation, but that the donor church is little more than a "monument".

The pews were acquired by All Saints church in Orby last year, after the original seating had succumbed to dry rot. They were taken from a church in Little Cawthorpe 15 miles away which has been condemned as structurally unsafe and was up for sale. But now the village has been told the pews must be returned. One young parishioner wrote to *The Independent* saying his church was being "killed".

The sale of the redundant church at Little Cawthorpe for a dwelling was never likely – not only is there subsidence, but it is surrounded by graves – and it will be taken over this month by the Church of England's Churches Conservation Trust.

The Trust looks after more than 300 redundant churches and insists on fixtures and fittings being retained so that the buildings are as they were when last used for regular worship.

Canon Stanley Jackson, chairman of the Lincoln diocese redundant churches uses committee, has some delicate negotiations ahead. "We have got to reclaim those pews," he said. But All Saints is unimpressed by the trust's rules and Lincoln's pleadings. Orby is a farming backwater where the Lincolnshire Wolds meet the "marshes" along the east coast.

not a place where folk normally make a fuss.

In his letter, Adrian Lockwood, aged nine, said All Saints had "come alive" since the villagers got together to raise money for painting. The church was also left £3,000 by a benefactor and this has been used to carpet the nave.

The pews come from a dead church to make ours alive," wrote Adrian, supported by 17 other parishioners, young and old. "Now [the trust] want them back again to make a church nice for a couple of people a year."

Father Terry Steele, vicar for the group of village churches that includes Orby, contrasted the struggle All Saints has had to raise money for repairs with the trust's ability to spend tens of thousands of pounds on "something which is just an empty monument".

He asked: "Is it ethically right to ask a living church with a caring congregation to give back the pews in those circumstances?" The monthly family service is attended by 20 to 40 people out of a village population of 250.

The trust is sympathetic and this weekend Orby was told there was no rush. Work on repairing Little Cawthorpe will not begin until 1998 and it was suggested Orby could find replacement pews in the meantime, though Father Terry

doubted it. Tim Beeson, case officer for the trust, said the redundant church still occupied a place in the hearts of the people of Little Cawthorpe. And it could still be used occasionally, such as for harvest festivals or carol services.

Though the east wall is unsafe, the Victorian church is just as it was when built in 1860 for £800. At the time, the Ecclesiastical Society considered it "a paradigm of the church which could be built for parishes of modest resources".

Sitting target: Adrian Lockwood, nine, says the pews from Little Cawthorpe, top left, are needed at All Saints in Orby, top right. Photographs: Emma Boam

Builders answer Islam's growing call to prayer

Chris Garner

As attendance figures at the Church of England continue to dwindle, Islam is addressing the opposite problem. Between 80 and 100 mosques are to be built in Britain by the millennium, according to architects involved in their construction.

Unlike most of the 1,000 existing mosques, which are converted warehouses, churches or community halls, the new ones feature traditional Islamic domes and minarets. The designs, such as that for one in Rochdale, which is based on Al-Aqsa in Jerusalem, adhere to the Eastern model, with grand entrance and fountains, marble and chandeliers inside.

"If you stand outside any of the new ones and blink, all of a sudden you will think you are in the Middle East. Far East or Indian subcontinent," said Abul Al-Samarraie, one of the architects at Bullen Consultants, in Bradford, which is involved in building 12 of the new mosques.

The change in Britain's landscape reflects a significant shift in attitude towards Muslims by the country's local planners, added Mr Al-Samarraie. "Local authorities are becoming more relaxed about mosques

making more of a statement now," he said. The architects' biggest constraint is height, according to Mr Samarraie. "Sixty feet is about the upper limit," he said. "Ideally, they would be as tall as possible so they could be seen from some distance. But the buildings will be in proportion, so they will look right."

Each mosque will hold an average of 2,000 worshippers at any one time. The cost of each place of worship is between £1m to £3m, money which comes from modest donations by Britain's million-strong Muslim population. Extensions or refurbishments will also take place at 160 existing mosques.

Twenty of the new mosques will be built in London. Tenders are sought for a £3m five-storey mosque in Tower Hamlets. Shamsul Haque, the local imam, welcomed the plan because it would absorb the growing numbers of worshippers.

In contrast, the number of Church of England churches – 16,000 – has dropped by about 800 in the past 25 years. However, 450 new churches have been built at the rate of 15 to 20 a year over the same period. In the Roman Catholic Church, the number – 2,760 – increased of four in 1994, according to the Catholic Media office.

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THE SINGLE CURRENCY DEBATE

Europe divided: Conservative leaders go on the offensive, arguing against greater integration and the Social Chapter

Rifkind rules out a federal future

Tony Barber
Europe Editor

Malcolm Rifkind, the Foreign Secretary, criticised Britain's European Union partners yesterday for trying to impose excessive change on the EU, claiming there were limits to most Europeans' enthusiasm for greater unity. In a speech notable for its attacks on several important EU projects, Mr Rifkind said Britain saw little need for the EU to take more decisions by majority vote rather than by inter-governmental consensus.

"We need to show people that we are not in a state of perpetual revolution," he told the Swedish Foreign Policy Institute in Stockholm. "I do not believe this pace of change can be sustained."

Mr Rifkind's speech was the first in a series in various EU capitals to promote understanding of the Government's resistance to deeper integration. In this context Sweden was a logical first stop, since both the Social Democratic government and public opinion oppose steps to closer unity that could erode national sovereignty.

His speech sounded more sceptical in tone than remarks which John Major made after hosting a Downing Street lunch yesterday for Alain Juppé, the French Prime Minister. "In many of the European matters, we have a common view. In others... we have a different view at present. We are trying to see to what extent we can bring the divergent views together," Mr Major said.

Mr Juppé said he believed monetary union was certain to proceed, as planned, in January 1999. "We also think it will be

in the interests of all our partners, especially Great Britain, to join us," he said.

Mr Rifkind claimed Britain had no "knee-jerk hostility" to the EU, but believed that co-operation should prevail over integration – an unpopular view in other EU capitals, where governments point out that an EU with 20 or more members, including the new democracies of central and Eastern Europe, will break down unless it takes more decisions by majority vote.

Challenging an image that is often conjured up by Chancellor Helmut Kohl of Germany, Mr Rifkind said that some leaders acted as if the 15-nation group were a bicycle that must continue to move forward or else fall over. This image was misleading, he said, because "no person or bicycle ever embarks on a journey that has neither end nor rest".

After his speech, Mr Rifkind took to task Mr Kohl, President Jacques Chirac of France and other EU leaders for denying that they wanted a "United States of Europe" while calling for a single currency and a common foreign and defence policy. "What is the difference between the kind of Europe that would create and a federal Europe? Federalists must admit what they are," he said.

However, his use of "federalism" to mean centralisation and unaccountability highlighted the differences between Britain and most other EU countries. For many EU states, especially Germany, which is a federal republic, "federalism" is synonymous with decentralisation, democracy and regional rights and does not imply government by an overbearing bureaucracy in Brussels.



No meeting of minds: John Major welcoming the French prime minister, Alain Juppé, into 10 Downing Street yesterday

Photograph: Andrew Burman

Swedes blame Brussels for the hard times

Mats Wiklund reports from a nation of 'euro' sceptics

Stockholm — The Foreign Secretary may believe that in arguably the most Euro-sceptic country within the European Union he could easily persuade the Swedish people about the advantages of Britain's position on Europe. And, to a certain extent, he may be right. Mr Rifkind could win the hearts and minds of a majority of Swedes who, two years after their country's entry into the EU, ardently believe that their lives have changed for the worse and that Brussels in many ways is to be blamed for it.

On the political level, the governing Social Democrats are struggling to contain a strong anti-EU minority

in the party while at the same time keeping all options open. The Prime Minister, Goran Persson, is thought to be in favour of joining the single currency – as is his Secretary of Finance, Erik Ashrinck. So far Mr Persson and Mr Ashrinck have decided to keep their views to themselves. But they will soon have to make up their minds. The future of Emu is to be decided by a party conference in the autumn.

As things stand at the moment, the Prime Minister faces a hard task should he decide to argue for Swedish membership of Economic and Mon-

etary Union (Emu). Already one member of his cabinet has openly come out against monetary union; many party activists feel very negative about the EU in general and about Emu in particular.

And why? The obvious response is that the debate over Europe and Sweden's role in it began at a very bad time. The past five years have seen great changes in the Swedish economy and welfare system. In the early 1990s unemployment rocketed and benefits were slashed while the establishment tried to convey the message that the

country's future depended on EU membership.

It succeeded, but at a high price. The yes-vote in the 1994 referendum on membership won by a narrow margin. The Social Democrats split over the issue and the party has yet to recover.

Since then unemployment has grown and the strains on a society built on the premise of pragmatism and cohesion are showing. Meanwhile, the former Communist party, Vänsterpartiet, has recruited a large number of disaffected Social Democrats; it is now the third largest political party in

Sweden. A substantial part of their success can be attributed to a strong, populist stance against Europe. Only the Conservatives and the Liberals are fully in favour of Emu. It seems most likely that Sweden will not join monetary union in 1999, though it will probably meet the Maastricht criteria.

As in London, the government in Stockholm is also trying to have it both ways, balancing the national interest against the party interest. For the moment, as in Great Britain, they are not always compatible. Mr Persson, however, is likely to be in a better position to do this than Mr Major. Swedes go to the polls in September 1998; the moment of truth has not arrived.

Major takes pre-election shot at social chapter

Fran Abrams and Colin Brown

John Major will risk causing new divisions within Britain's European partners today by using a visit to Brussels to launch a pre-election attack on the social chapter.

The Prime Minister will attack Labour's proposal to end Britain's opt-out from the chapter at a European Policy Forum business conference. Mr Major will warn that the social chapter is anti-competitive, and deregulated Britain is a magnet for inward investment.

The speech may play well at home, but it is unlikely to impress other European leaders. Alain Juppé, the French Prime

Minister said after his meeting with Mr Major in London yesterday that the social chapter was not an obstacle to job creation in France.

"I think there is no relation or no link between those elements... our main objective to create jobs in France is to consolidate our budget and financial situation," Mr Juppé said.

After the meeting, the Tories' election campaign took a Euro-sceptic turn with the launch of a poster proclaiming: "New Labour, Euro Danger."

Tory sources said the poster attacked Labour rather than Europe, and that it was meant to highlight the party's plan to sign up to the Social Chapter. However, coming immedi-

ately after comments by Labour's foreign affairs spokesman, Robin Cook, that Britain could join the single currency by 2002, it struck a rather different note.

The poster, which features a lion with a red tear-drop, was unveiled by the party chairman, Brian Mawhinney, and the Deputy Prime Minister, Michael Heseltine. It claims that the Social Chapter could cost hundreds of thousands of jobs and could put Britain's prosperity at risk.

Mr Heseltine said Labour would introduce a minimum wage and trade union reforms which would undermine the country's competitiveness. The party was fudging the issue of

the single currency, he claimed, and Mr Cook was trying to avoid difficult issues by "kicking the whole thing into the next century".

But Mr Cook said yesterday that Europe should be an association of free states, coming together not to surrender sovereignty but to co-operate. While there were "formidable problems about joining a single currency, Britain would face long-term penalties if it stayed out," he said.

"It would be very interesting to know if Conservative politicians are prepared to say that 'yes if it goes ahead, yes if it proves a success, if the single currency is strong, we'll still stay out on a matter of principle'."

Monetary union could be reckless gamble, warns Eddie George

Yvette Cooper, Sarah Helm and agencies

A European economic watchdog boosted Italy's chances of joining monetary union yesterday when it cleared Rome of fudging economic figures.

But at the same time Eddie George, the Governor of the Bank of England, warned of the dangers of a single currency that was built on weak foundations, and German bankers said they hoped countries like Italy would not be allowed into Economic and Monetary Union.

The Maastricht treaty created a series of economic tests which countries must pass in order to qualify for monetary union, and bankers are concerned that those tests must be strictly applied. They want to see convergence – evidence that Europe's economies are coming into line with each other.

In pursuit of that goal, Italy was yesterday given the go-ahead to set up a new system of accounting which is expected to reduce the country's budget deficit enough to meet the Maastricht ceiling.

The finding, from Eurostat, the EU's statistical office, could prove crucial in determining

whether Italy qualifies for membership of the first wave of monetary union. But it is likely to fuel controversy over whether budget rigging is being allowed in order to ensure countries qualify.

The Italian Treasury predicted that the ruling would help the country make the EMU grade. Clearly delighted that it had been cleared of "creative accounting" the Treasury statement said the decision "proves that Italy has not adopted any illegal measures to improve its accounts, nor does it intend to in the future". The experts found that Italy was within its rights to defer interest payments on certain types of government bonds, thereby allowing a deficit reduction in 1997 of 0.26 per cent of gross domestic product.

In November the European Commission forecast that Italy's deficit would stand at 3.3 per cent of GDP in 1997 – above the Maastricht ceiling of 3 per cent. However the commission noted at the time that a favourable ruling on the bond interest payments could bring Italy into line.

The Eurostat statement yesterday was the first of a series of rulings on whether certain accounting methods should be al-



Eddie George: Warned against 'charging ahead'

lowed. Germany, which has already called for the strictest application of the economic convergence criteria, is likely to look askance at yesterday's finding. The government and the Bundesbank are concerned about allowing weaker economies into EMU.

The Bank of England is also worried. Mr George said last night that it was vital that the convergence tests be strictly applied. Speaking to the Bankers Club Annual Banquet at the Guildhall in the City of London, Mr George emphasised the risks of joining EMU,

and downplayed possible dangers for Britain in remaining outside a European single currency bloc.

He said: "It would be a mistake in my view for monetary union to go ahead without reasonable confidence of genuine, sustainable, convergence between its members."

The Governor avoided discussing what would count as genuine convergence, hinting that the current criteria in the Maastricht treaty might not be enough to ensure the smooth functioning of the euro. Nevertheless, he said, "it would be a reckless gamble to charge ahead if even those criteria were not met sustainably, and in substance rather than just form". Senior German bankers also sounded a warning.

The financial markets are also nervous about early Italian membership of EMU, which could weaken the euro. "If Italy and certain other countries are in, a time bomb is ticking within EMU," Deutsche Bank board member Ulrich Cartelieri said at the annual World Economic Forum in Davos, Switzerland. "The fiscal success that the government in Rome has enjoyed recently cannot be maintained in the long run."

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international

Milosevic's truncheons inspire students to strengthen resolve

Emma Daly
Belgrade

If Slobodan Milosevic meant to frighten pro-democracy demonstrators into staying quietly at home, he may have miscalculated. Unleashing Serbia's riot police against them on Sunday night seemed yesterday to have proved counter-productive.

Tens of thousands of protesters marched through central Belgrade, first under the banner of university students, then with Zajedno (Together), the opposition coalition. By late afternoon, thousands of demonstrators were facing ranks of several hundred riot police who were intent on stopping the protesters from marching away from an opposition rally in Republic Square.

Zoran Djindjic, an opposition leader, urged the crowd to disperse peacefully. Most did so, but a hard core of about 300 stood firm, and some youths hurled stones.

As pieces of paving stones rained down, police pursued the youths. A strange game of hide-and-seek followed, as police chased a small group through the streets and beat those they caught. At least seven were treated at the students' medical centre. Police later withdrew from the streets, leaving an uneasy calm. Zajedno told people to meet in 32 neighbourhoods later in the evening, but not to try to converge on the city centre again.

Earlier, Vesna Pesic, one of the triumvirate leading Zajedno, had appeared on the platform yesterday, with a hand bandaged from the beating she took from riot police on Sunday night. The crowd in the square roared in approval as Ms Pesic, Mr Djindjic and Vuk Draskovic insisted the protests would continue until President Milosevic acknowledges Zajedno victories in the local elections held on 17 November. "Last night's violence shows Milosevic does not know what to do," Mr Djindjic said, as his colleagues suggested that violence might herald the imposition of a state of emergency.

The courts were supposed to rule, yet again, on the status of 14 city council races won by the opposition. Until now, legal rulings against the regime have carried no weight, but Ms Pesic said a state of emergency might be used to override any decision in Zajedno's favour. The violence has sparked international repercussions, drawing condemnation from Britain and an



Let us spray: Police firing a water cannon at anti-government demonstrators in the centre of Belgrade

Photograph: AP

invitation from France to the Zajedno leaders.

Both London and Paris seem to have switched tactics, apparently calculating that public criticism of the Milosevic government and acceptance of a potentially viable alternative leadership in Serbia could do more to resolve the situation than maintaining direct links with the regime. As usual, there was no word from the Serbian government, except a report on state television, which said that the riot police had been forced to act because protesters were blocking traffic.

Aleksandr Tijanic, who resigned as Serbia's Information Minister because

of the protests, does not expect his former boss to give in easily.

"I think [the use of police] was a small exercise to see if the police would follow orders, to see how they would behave, how the demonstrators would behave, how the media would react," he said yesterday. "I think it will be tried again." Mr Tijanic believes Mr Milosevic needs to use force to cling to power. "It would cost him too much to agree a political solution... he does not portray this as a political problem but as a problem of social order for the police to deal with." The last time Belgrade experienced a "social problem" was in 1991, when Mr Milosevic

crushed demonstrations by sending tanks on to the street.

Sunday's attack was perhaps the worst example of state violence against peaceful demonstrators since 1991. The students, who have run parallel protests since the elections, were particularly angered by a police incursion into a Belgrade University building on Sunday night. At student headquarters, Dragan Ostojic, who was acting as security, described being beaten by the police as they tried to chase students into the building.

Mr Ostojic said he turned fire-bombs on to the police who, an hour before, had used water cannon against

the protesters. Medical students at a makeshift first-aid centre treated more than 50 people - including some policemen - for minor injuries and said they witnessed several arrests.

However, Zajedno leaders were upbeat yesterday afternoon. "We will express our readiness to persist, to show that there is no more fear of the police or the regime," said Miodrag Peresic, Mr Djindjic's deputy. "I think today is a turning-point," he added.

On the streets of Belgrade last night, protesters were waiting uneasily to find out whether Sunday night was just a one-off, or whether it was a taste of things to come.

significant shorts

'I saw mercenaries in Zaire', says EU aid chief

The European Union's humanitarian aid chief, on return from Africa's Great Lakes region, said she had seen mercenaries in Zaire. "All our information confirms there are mercenaries from both sides in the region," Emma Bonino said. "On the Zaire side I saw mercenaries. We stayed in the same hotel." She said 200,000 refugees were stranded in Zaire; as many were lost or dead in the bush. Meanwhile, a Zairean defence official said it had chartered planes to bring in troops from Morocco, Togo and Chad to help fight the rebels. **Reuters - Brussels**

Going for Dutch connection

France, the severest critic of the permissive Dutch drugs policy, signed a customs deal with the Netherlands aimed at strangling drug-smuggling lines. Dutch and French authorities will target a host of illegal goods, but will concentrate on drugs shipments. **AP - The Hague**

Japan, EU toast drink deal

Japan and the European Union agreed to changes in taxes on imported liquor, settling one of a long dispute. Japan agreed to raise taxes on domestic spirits known as *shochu*, made mainly from barley, and lower those on liqueur and spirits such as vodka from overseas, so that they are all at the same tax rate. **Reuters - Tokyo**

Paris grim over Nato post

The French Foreign Minister, Hervé de Charette, said France might fail to persuade Washington to let a European officer take over Nato's southern command from an American. The two countries were seeking ways to settle the dispute. Asked what type of compromise might be possible, he said: "We'll see." **Reuters - Paris**

Pact to save HK activists

Western governments have forged a pact to get 40 Chinese dissidents and their families out of Hong Kong before China takes over on 1 July, *Time* said. They will be flown out and given asylum in the West. **AP - Hong Kong**

Swaziland hit by strikes

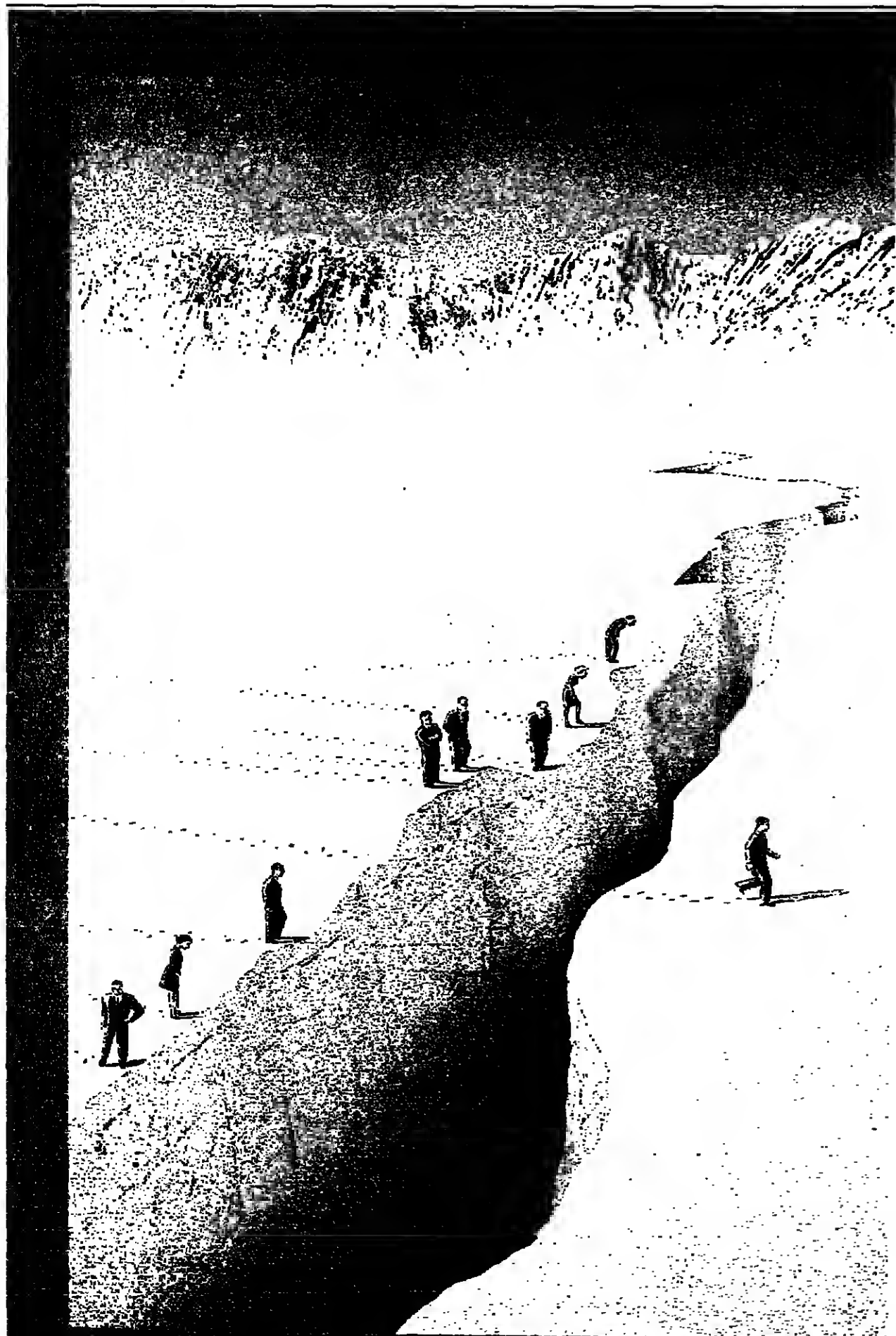
A strike paralysed Swaziland's transport and businesses in a protest for political reform. Gunfire erupted in Manzini, the industrial centre south of Mbabane, and bombs landed a bus at the central terminal. **AP - Mbabane**

Peru denies rebel accord

President Alberto Fujimori of Peru dismissed suggestions of a peace accord with guerrillas holding hostages at the Japanese ambassador's residence in Lima, saying his country is already at peace. **Reuters - Washington**

Hunger to live

Alexander Oein, 17, caught in an avalanche near the west Norwegian town of Molde, could not dig himself out but he was able to eat away enough of the snow to create an air pocket that kept him from smothering. The manoeuvre paid off: he was rescued three hours later. **AP - Oslo**



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Israel in quandary over social captives

Stephanie Nolan
Jerusalem

Haifa Faras is serving a two-year sentence for trying to stab an Israeli soldier with a knife in September 1995. She should be released this week. Israel agreed as part of its Hebron deal with the PLO three weeks ago that she and 28 other female Palestinian political prisoners would be freed during the Muslim holy month of Ramadan, which ends this week.

But Ms Faras, 31, is not a typical political prisoner, and she is far from elated at the thought of her impending freedom. She admits that her motives in confronting the soldier with a kitchen knife were not primarily political: she was desperate to escape her family, who wanted her to go to Saudi Arabia, and thought an Israeli jail was the best place to do it.

The *Independent* has learned that many of the other female prisoners have similar stories: they had social, rather than political, motives for their attacks on Israelis. According to the Women's Organisation for Political Prisoners, only eight of the 29 women – whose release was debated for weeks in the peace negotiations and bitterly decried by some Israelis who oppose freeing women they call "terrorists" – were primarily political in their motivation.

The others are what the WOPP calls "social cases": unhappy young girls who sought personal freedom in the form of an Israeli jail. Fleeing abusive homes, arranged marriages, or choosing to continue their studies, they committed acts of violence against Israelis, knowing that they would be given lengthy jail sentences.

In autumn 1995, Ms Faras visited relatives in the Gaza strip. Her parents, Palestinian refugees who now live in Saudi Arabia, told her it was time to join them. "But I was so happy, to be in my country [Gaza]," she says. "I had studied microbiology for six years and I knew that back in Saudi I couldn't be free like I was in Gaza."

So one morning she tried to stab a soldier at a checkpoint in Gaza, and as she had expected, she soon found herself part of a well-known small band of women prisoners in Telmond Prison, north of Tel Aviv. Her family has never been to visit her in jail – "they are angry, they

think my disobedience was shameful" – and she dreads facing them, if they will in fact take her back, upon her release.

"Palestinian society is patriarchal, and under the Israeli occupation, it was especially tightly controlled," said Itzhak Jikhilieb, an activist with the WOPP, which raises funds and provides lawyers for the women. "Some women saw no other escape. They had nothing to lose, and in the environment of the intifada [Palestinian rebellion], they saw stabbing a soldier as the best way out."

Last summer, when Israel announced that all the women except five who "have Jewish blood on their hands" would be released, the others refused to go. They barricaded themselves together in two cells and held a 19-day hunger strike, until Israel agreed that they would stay in prison. "And if we are not all released this week, then we are all staying," Ms Faras said. "I've learned here that it's a good thing for girls to fight in the resistance," she explains.

Ms Faras has an almost reverential respect for the five women for whom she has remained in jail. Among them is Rula Abu Dehu, 28, who has served nine years of a life-plus-25-years sentence for transporting a weapon used to kill an Israeli, a charge she still denies.

Abu Dehu was a member of a cell of the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine, and still speaks proudly of her activities with them. But she acknowledged in Telmond last week that few of the women imprisoned there with her were activists like she was.

"It's true, they weren't like me," she said. "But look at what they chose to do: they didn't run away, they didn't use drugs or rob a store, they chose to attack a soldier. That spirit of resistance is in all Palestinian women."

Nabulsi, West Bank (AP) – A Palestinian land-dealer who died in custody over the weekend was tortured by his Palestinian interrogators, the justice minister, Fathi Abu Meidein said in an interview published yesterday.

The death of Yousef Baba, 32, brought to 11 the number of Palestinians who have died in detention since Yasser Arafat's self-rule government took control of parts of the West Bank and Gaza strip in May 1994.



Winning ways: A supporter kissing Muslim League leader Nawaz Sharif, likely victor in yesterday's poll. Photograph: AFP

Pakistan votes old leader in from the cold as sense of futility rules

Jan McGirk
Lahore

Early election results in Pakistan indicated that the Muslim League leader Mian Mohammed Nawaz Sharif would win a popular majority and be able to form a new government as predicted.

Since martial law was lifted a dozen years ago, the seat of power in Islamabad has become a dunking stool, with arch-rivals Benazir Bhutto and Nawaz Sharif toppling in turn. There were plenty of excuses for Pakistanis to stay home from the polls yesterday. But blaming the cold weather or the late nights due to the holy month of Ramadan for the thin turnout, estimated at roughly 28 per cent, did not mask a general

sense of futility. Few people seemed to believe that their ballots would make much difference. Before their newly chosen leader's five-year term was up, any choice made by the nation's 56 million potential voters could be ousted again by the President, as Ms Bhutto and her government were dismissed last November, following allegations of widespread corruption.

A bored election worker in mid-town Lahore, waiting with a cluster of soldiers at a grimy polling booth, said: "Everybody is fed up. There could be another election within six months." No one had shown up to cast a ballot there five hours after elections started. Even the erstwhile cricket champion Imran Khan and his wife Jemima could not vote for their fledgling Movement for Justice

Party – Mr Khan had registered in a district where his party fielded no candidates.

Ms Bhutto has vowed to challenge any result that goes against her. Forecasts that the former prime minister Nawaz Sharif would win, coupled with despair over charges against her, made her supporters "too disheartened" to show up in force, party workers said. Many Muslim League partisans also stayed home, confident of victory, a spokesman said.

Agitators for the religious Jamaat-e-Islami party drew the most attention in the quiet streets, shouting slogans and leafletting vehicles. They had called for polls to be postponed until after charges were pressed against officials accused by the caretaker government's Accountability Commission.

Fur flies over Russian PM's unbearable forest jaunt

Phil Reeves
Moscow

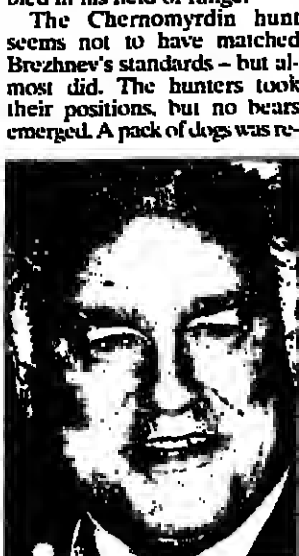
Russians have long thought nothing of the fact that their leaders like to ease the tensions of Kremlin life by blasting away at fur and feather. Lenin, Nikita Khrushchev and Leonid Brezhnev were all fond of stepping out into the woods to wipe out a little wildlife. Though sick, Boris Yeltsin last year shot 40 ducks and a wild boar for his friend the German Chancellor, Helmut Kohl, without a squeak from anyone except his doctors.

But Viktor Chernomyrdin, the Prime Minister, seems to have gone too far. Even Russia, with its fondness for furs and fighting dogs, has been shaken by revelations about a hunting expedition in which two bear cubs and their mother were goaded out of hibernation and shot dead – one of the cubs falling to a bullet from the Prime Minister's rifle.

Hunting is traditionally regarded by Russian men as a means of showing the world that they are *muzhiki* – no-nonsense, guys' guys. But Mr Chernomyrdin is emerging from his visit to the forests of Yaroslavl, north of Moscow, with less of a red neck than a red face.

even tied them to trees on days when their leader's aim was particularly unreliable. When the old man's fancy turned to rabbits, his bodyguards would release animals in the nearby woods in such quantities that he was certain eventually to hit one of them as they hopped and nibbled in his field of range.

The Chernomyrdin hunt seems not to have matched Brezhnev's standards – but almost did. The hunters took their positions, but no bears emerged. A pack of dogs was re-



Chernomyrdin: Shot a cub goaded out of hibernation

portedly sent in to arouse the animals from their hibernation. Still no bears. Only after the hunters poked inside the den with sticks did a cub stagger out into the snow, to receive a bullet between the eyes, courtesy of the honoured guest. According to the newspapers, the second cub was killed by the governor, while their mother went down in a hail of bullets.

In Russia, killing adult bears causes little outrage. But cubs are a different matter. The government "should be ashamed, before the people, before God, before their own consciences", thundered *Novaya Gazeta*, Olegovsk called it "akin to common murder".

Mr Chernomyrdin has defended his conduct. "I do not know why there is all this clamour," he told the TV current affairs programme *Izvestiya*. "When the bear is in the den, we are supposed to peek in first?"

There was a she-bear and two cubs, but they were grown up," he said. "I would like the journalists who wrote these [stories] to have a face-to-face encounter with these cubs, not in the office, but somewhere else. I would enjoy watching that." It is, however, too late. One of the cubs has been stuffed. The other was lunch for the hungry hunters.

Details have emerged in two publications, *Ogonyok* magazine and *Novaya Gazeta* newspaper. Mr Chernomyrdin, long caricatured as a dreary bureaucrat, fuelled the scandal by admitting the bears were shot, disputing only their age and size.

If the papers are to be believed, the preparations for the hunt rivalled those of a production at the Bolshoi Theatre. Bulldozers reportedly ploughed a mile-and-a-half-long road through the forest to a bear den and mowed down a clearing for a helicopter landing pad.

The woods were swarmed by armed agents of the Russian Federal Security Service, successors to the KGB. Mr Chernomyrdin and his hosts, accompanied by bodyguards and professional hunters swept on to the scene in a convoy of Volga cars, accompanied by a mobile dining room and kitchen. An ambulance was also on hand.

The Prime Minister's best, the governor of Yaroslavl, appears to have been anxious that they should enjoy a fruitful day, not least because the point of inviting him was to persuade the government settle an enormous debt to the region.

In Brezhnev's time, aides would release wild boar in front of the muzzle of his gun. They

Clinton close to budget deal dream



Clinton: Taxes will be the real issue of the address

Rupert Cornwell
Washington

Within the space of three days this week, President Bill Clinton delivers a State of the Union address and sends a draft 1998 budget to Capitol Hill, which between them might help realise Washington's impossible dream – a solid, bipartisan deal to balance the federal budget within five years.

Tonight's State of the Union will contain few sensations, as befits a President who faces a Congress controlled by the opposite party and who won re-election last November by seizing the middle ground of American politics.

It will be Mr Clinton's opportunity to reveal the building

bricks of his famous "Bridge to the 21st Century," not so much sweeping proposals as a host of "micro-measures" dealing with the environment, welfare, schools, crime and above all taxes. Thursday's budget will flesh these out with figures, most notably \$98bn (£50bn) worth of tax cuts between 1998 and 2002, targeted towards job training, university education and a modest lowering of capital-gains taxes.

His opponents, predictably, seek cuts of almost twice the size, paid for by tighter curbs on the growth of the Medicare and Medicaid federal health programmes. But the gap between the sides is narrowing, and for the first time since they captured Congress in 1994, the Republicans have not declared a Clin-

ton budget "dead on arrival".

Such is the most visible symptom of "bipartisanship," the watchword here since elections whose outcome of divided government was widely taken as a demand from voters for both parties to cease squabbling.

Admittedly, sideshows along the way could derail all. One is the quarrel over a balanced-budget amendment to the Constitution, as vehemently opposed by the Administration as it is pressed by the Republican Congressional leadership. The President has no veto over the proposal, which is within a vote or two of the required two-thirds majority in both Houses. But its passage could destroy today's veneer of brotherhood.

Other hazards are a potential

row over federal welfare reform, and the ethics controversies swirling around Speaker Newt Gingrich and Mr Clinton, for his involvement in shady Democratic campaign fund-raising. These dealings will be probed by a Senate Committee, which next week will begin hearings that could degenerate into another White House witch-hunt.

But prospects have never been better for a balanced budget deal. The deficit, at \$107bn in fiscal 1996, is the smallest in nearly two decades and Republicans are chastened by the memory of the two unpopular Government shutdowns they forced in winter 1995/96, a misjudgement that launched Mr Clinton on his comeback and re-election.

NF set for fourth victory

John Lichfield
Paris

Desperate efforts were being made yesterday to prevent a fourth French town hall from falling into the hands of the far right after a startlingly clear victory for the National Front in a satellite town of Marseilles.

The first round result in Vitrolles, an unlovely concrete jungle in the Bouches-du-Rhône, might be written off as a local aberration. The Socialist mayor of the town is under investigation for fraud and the area has high unemployment and severe racial tensions. But confirmation of the National Front victory in the second round this Sunday will have powerful, national reverberations.

Vitrolles would be the fourth town, all in a small arc from the

Rhône valley to the Mediterranean coast, to fall to the National Front. More important still are the personalities involved.

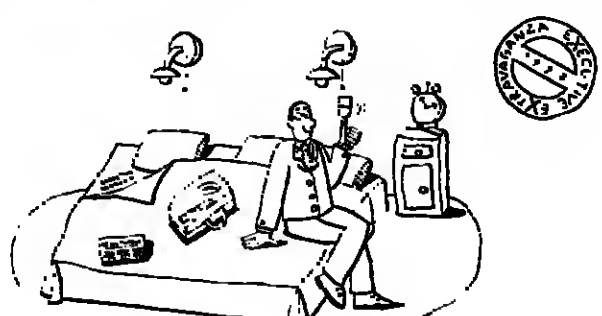
The nominal victor on Sunday, with 47 per cent of the vote, was Catherine Megret, an electoral novice. The real victor was her husband, Bruno Megret, 47, the second-in-command of the National Front, plausible rising star of the French extreme right, and possible successor to the NF founder and leader, Jean-Marie Le Pen.

Mr Megret is banned from running because he exceeded the legal limit on election expenses when he lost the mayoral election in Vitrolles in June 1995. The entire election was so riddled with "irregularities" – on all sides – that it was declared void by the Council of State. A proxy victory for Mr Megret in

the re-run would confirm him – a product of the meritocratic French establishment and former member of President Chirac's RPR party – as the attractive but sinister face of the second generation of NF extremism.

Unlike Mr Le Pen, a former paratrooper with one eye and a bombastic manner, both Mr Megret and his wife have the comfortable middle-class looks and credentials to extend the reach of the NF further into the ranks of the "respectable" right.

While remaining ostentatiously loyal to their leader, the Megrets have repackaged the undisputed xenophobia of Le Penism as the defence of French values against globalism and multi-culturalism and the protection of the power of the state against "human-rights-ism".



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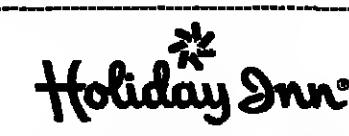
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obituaries / gazette

Godfrey Baseley

When we left for Australia on Boxing Day a neighbour asked us to take a packet to her daughter, who has been living in Sydney for several years. I assumed it contained Christmas gifts for the Australian grandchildren. But no, it was tapes of recent editions of *The Archers*, which her daughter was missing desperately. It was symptomatic of the compulsive attraction *The Archers* commands. 46 years after Godfrey Baseley first started it.

In 1948 Baseley, then the producer of agricultural programmes for the BBC Midlands Region, attended a meeting in Birmingham Council Chamber at which a farmer suggested that there should be a regular serial programme, similar to the thriller *Dick Barton, Special Agent*, but without the violence, covering the many problems of country folk in general. Baseley took up the idea, and recruited Geoffrey Webb and Edward Mason, the *Dick Barton* writers, to script some trial episodes of what was to become the most popular and longest-running British radio series. It was first heard in the Midlands Region only at Whitson in 1950, and nationally on the Light Programme from 1 January 1951.

Within two years the daily audience following the lives of Doris Archer and her neighbours at Ambridge had risen to nine and a half million. The programme deliberately included items of practical farming advice (about 15 per cent), supplied to Baseley by the Ministry of Agriculture, but the policy was "to give the general listener, i.e. the towns-

man, a good balance between the purely factual and the more entertaining aspects of country life".

In October 1953 Baseley was appointed to be the BBC's television rural programme organiser. When I became Head of Television Talks two months later I found that one of my duties was to write the annual staff report on Baseley's work. This was difficult, for he still devoted the vast majority of his time to supervising the detailed development of *The Archers* and practically nothing to the television service.

Baseley was a hard taskmaster. In 1955 he decided to get rid of the actress Yvonne Churchman (Mrs Tony Pilgrim) who played the role of the volatile Grace Archer and decided that she should die trying to save a horse from a blazing stable. This episode of *The Archers* was broadcast on the day that TTV started. Telephone lines to the BBC were blocked for hours. Among the callers was a man, who seemed quite young, who seemed beside himself with grief. He rang up again after midnight moaning into the telephone that his life had been ruined. But this time he was mauling with drink, and finally burst into tears.

Baseley always denied that it was a deliberate publicity stunt, pointing out that the decision to kill Grace had been taken more than three months ahead. The placing of the episode was at a joint decision of *The Archers* producer Tony Shryane and the Controller of the Light Programme. The BBC's publicity



The Archers' creators on a fact-finding foray in 1953: Baseley (right) with, left to right, Geoffrey Webb (writer), Tony Shryane (producer) and Ted Mason (writer) on the farm with Dr W. Blunt. The first episode was heard nationally on 1 January 1951. Photograph: Hulton Getty

officer, John Crawley, made sure that the media correspondents had a special opportunity of hearing that edition. In the next morning's newspapers Grace Archer's heroic death completely upstaged the opening of TTV. Challenged in the hand-new television programme *Highlight*, the scriptwriters replied: "You feel badly about the death of Grace Archer. What do you think we feel? But why blame us? Do people blame Shakespeare for the death of Desdemona?"

Baseley was a thickset man with a booming voice. He had been educated at two Quaker boarding schools, Sibford and Bootham, and had originally trained for the stage. He made his first broadcast in 1929 and became a producer in Birmingham in 1943. The irascible Gilbert Harding was involved in some of Baseley's early farming programmes. When Baseley's wife Bessie asked him to tea and poured the milk in tea, Harding went into a fearful tantrum. Mrs Baseley gave as good as she

got and the occasion perished miserably. The next morning Harding was full of remorse and telephoned to apologise.

Baseley was dismissed as script editor of *The Archers* in 1972 and replaced by Malcolm Lynch, a former scriptwriter of *Coronation Street*. He disliked the arrival of Vanessa Whitburn from *Brookside*, and was dismayed by the "outing" of the fictional landlord of the Cat and Fiddle. "I cannot understand for a moment why they should want a homosexual character,"

he said last year. "The *Archers* has completely lost its way. Luckily I'm nearly completely deaf and can't listen to it any more."

Leonard Mital

Cyril Godfrey Baseley, radio producer, journalist and actor: born Alvechurch, Worcestershire 2 October 1904; General Programme Assistant, rural affairs, BBC 1947-53; Organiser (rural programmes), TTV Talks 1953-57; married Bessie Whitburn (died 1989; two daughters); died Bromsgrove, Worcestershire 2 February 1997.

Theodore Redpath

In 1950 Trinity College, Cambridge, steeled itself to appoint its first teaching Fellow in English. This was not a self-evidently respectable subject, at least in the college of Newton, Bentley, Rutherford and Wittenstein. Elsewhere in Cambridge a man called Leavis was on the rampage.

But in Theodore Redpath Trinity had found someone special, even by its own high standards. Born in Streatham, south-west London, in 1913, the son of an engineer who had built the first Blue Train and the Golden Arrow, he went to school in Cambridge, at the Leys. He had read English at St Cathar-

ine's College with TR. Henn and taken a starred first, before going on to a PhD on Leibniz under the supervision of C.D. Broad. In the Second World War he worked in intelligence and in 1948 he was called to the Bar. He sometimes wondered what a legal career might have brought him, apart - with a smile - from making more money. As Trinity's first English don he made a bit of history instead, and a difference to many young lives for 30 years after.

He was full of surprises. He edited Donne's and Shakespeare's sonnets, collected essays on the English Romantic poets, wrote books on Tolstoy

and Wittenstein (his *Ludwig Wittenstein: a student's memoir* appeared in 1990), worked until only a few weeks before his death on a translation of Sophocles' tragedies. He spent an unusually active retirement through the 1980s, teaching in Japan and setting up as a wine merchant. He was not the sort of academic whose answer to the question "What are you working on now?" can easily be predicted.

He would have published more had he been a less devoted teacher and college tutor, or more ebullient in the sense of his own gifts. His modesty could be as breathtaking as the range

of his abilities and interests, in languages, philosophy and music, as well as in literature. He took other people's opinions as seriously as his own, even when these issued from opinionated students. This could be alarming and educative for those prepared to be shaped by the frankness of his "So you really think that?"

A youthful Quaker, he married Sarah Campbell-Taylor in 1964. Shortly afterwards he assured an undergraduate contemplating marriage as early in life as his own had been relatively late that it was a wonderful idea and that it had done him "a world of good".

The world of good turned out to include three children.

He inspired awe and amusement in unpredictable proportions. A rampant stickler for rules and traditions, he could cause consternation by announcing that he could not speak to you because, as it might be, you were not wearing a gown, or could not shake hands because it was not the vacation - a bewildering taboo which he stoutly upheld even in his final months. For all his mildness and unfailing courtesy, he knew how to wield a remarkably resolute jaw.

No teacher, let alone a college tutor, could possibly recall

every last one of those here-and-gone students. Yet Theo Redpath seemed to. None of them is likely ever to forget him.

Adrian Poole

Robert Theodore Holmes Redpath, English scholar and teacher: born London 17 August 1913; Fellow of Trinity College, Cambridge 1950-97; Assistant Lecturer in English, Cambridge University 1951-54; Lecturer 1954-80; books include *Tolstoy 1960*; *The Young Romantics and Critical Opinion 1967-74*; *Ludwig Wittenstein: a student's memoir 1990*; married 1964 Sarah Campbell-Taylor (one son, two daughters); died Cambridge 30 January 1997.

Professor Peter Morris

It was always possible to recognise an article or a review written by Peter Morris without looking for the author's name. It usually began on a conversational tone and, if it was about French politics, it would contain humorous remarks before moving to a more serious appraisal. For example, he wrote of the advanced age of many French politicians, describing their presence as "government by bus-pass holders" and commenting that, when Harold Wilson talked of a week's holiday in politics, he could not have had in mind the career structures of French politicians. Then he went on to write about the intellectual agility and administrative competence that the system instilled in its gov-

erning elite, the weakness of political parties and the resources provided by city halls.

Morris was a very successful teacher of politics, both British and French, well appreciated both in Britain and France. His sudden and early death from cancer is the more tragic since he was starting on a new and important period in his life.

Having recently been appointed to the Chair of Modern Politics and History at Aston University, he was about to begin his term as Head of the Department of Languages and European Studies. He had been invited by Roland Dumas to become the British representative at the Institut Français Mitterrand in Paris and was beginning to get embroiled in the contro-

versy concerning the disposal of Mitterrand's private archives and their availability to researchers. The book on which he was working, with his French colleagues Serge Berstein and Nicolas Roussellier, about the history of Democratic Liberalism, is a considerable work in a major series.

Morris was educated at Cambridge High School for Boys and at Emmanuel College, where he became a Research Fellow. He was also an *auditeur libre* at the Ecole Normale Supérieure in Paris. Then for nearly 25 years he was Lecturer and Senior Lecturer at Nottingham University, from where he was three times invited to teach at the Institut d'Etudes Politiques in Paris. Both there and in Not-

tingham he established excellent relations with students.

In Paris Morris appeared as the sort of Englishman whom young French people had read about and who they thought no longer existed. He was cheerful, good-tempered and tolerant. He was patient, ready to help those for whom the intricacies of the French Radical Party (on which he wrote his Cambridge doctorate thesis) or the complexities of Labour Party politics appeared baffling. At the centenary celebrations for General de Gaulle held in Paris during November 1990, he was much in demand when the news broke of the resignation of Margaret Thatcher.

His books *French Politics Today* (1994) and *Consensus Pol-*

itics from Attlee to Thatcher (1989) were adopted as textbooks in many universities, and his *Histoire du Royaume Uni* (1993) was widely read in France. He played an important role in the British Association for the Study of Modern and Contemporary France from its foundation in 1979.

Most summers he spent in Normandy, at Bameville, on the Cotentin coast. There he was a popular figure, especially in the *Plages de l'Église*. One of the last stories he brought back from there was about his conversation with a neighbour who assured him that the Princess of Wales had behaved with much more dignity than had President Mitterrand.

Douglas Johnson



Morris: French and British politics

Peter Morris, political historian: born Cambridge 2 September 1926; Lecturer in Politics, Nottingham University 1972-89; Senior Lecturer 1989-96; Professor of Modern History and Politics, Aston University 1996-97; married; died Nottingham 1 February 1997.

Decision to order rehearing was not flawed

LAW REPORT

4 February 1997

Maure v MacMillan Distribution Ltd; Court of Appeal (Lord Justice Hale, Lord Justice Waite, Lord Justice Schiemann) 23 January 1996

Extended reasons for a majority decision by an industrial tribunal whose chairman found himself in the minority should not be signed by the chairman for promulgation until the majority lay members had seen and approved the text.

The Court of Appeal so recommended, when dismissing the employee's appeal against the Employment Appeal Tribunal's decision to remit his unfair dismissal claim for rehearing by a differently constituted industrial tribunal on the ground that the chairman of the original tribunal, when writing reasons for their majority decision in the employee's favour, had failed to give the two lay members sufficient opportunity to approve his summary of their views.

Mrs Susan Raskin, to be a district judge, on the Western Circuit. Dr George Goldstein, to be Director of the Ashmolean Museum, Oxford. Mr Stephen Cox, to be Executive Secretary of the Royal Society. The Duke of Gloucester, to be Patron of the Royal Anthropological Institute. The Duchess of Gloucester, to be Patron of the Parkinson's Disease Society and the Royal School for the Blind Seaboard. The Rev Roger Hollings, to be Preacher to Gray's Inn.

that he had been unfairly selected for redundancy. The two lay members of the industrial tribunal upheld his claim; the chairman did not. The complaint was upheld and the employers appealed.

Shortly before the matter came before the appeal tribunal, Mrs Stanbrook, one of the two lay members of the industrial tribunal, complained in a letter to her regional chairman that the chairman of the industrial tribunal, in reducing into writing the extended reasons for the decision in which he had found himself in a minority, had failed to provide her and the other lay member with a sufficient opportunity of approving his summary of their reasoning before the final text of the decision was promulgated.

Mrs Stanbrook asserted that the chairman, in drafting the extended reasons, had begun by producing two successive drafts of the majority's reasons, both of which they had rejected as an incomplete or inaccurate statement of their views. They then produced their own draft. Neither of them was sent a copy of, or invited to ap-

prove, the final version of the decision as promulgated.

The appeal tribunal, chaired by Mr Justice Morison, invited the parties to make submissions on the preliminary question whether, in view of the doubts raised as to the accuracy of the written reasons for the decision being appealed against, the appeal could proceed at all.

Three options were considered: to ignore the complaint and proceed on the assumption that the majority's decision had been accurately summarised; to invite the industrial tribunal to clear up the doubt themselves by confirmation and (if necessary) elaboration of those reasons; or to refer the whole claim for rehearing by a freshly constituted industrial tribunal.

The appeal tribunal concluded, reluctantly, that the only way of ensuring justice on both sides would be to follow the third course, and they directed accordingly. The employee appealed, contending that the proper course would have been the second alternative, to remit the case to the original tribunal for confirmation of their reasons.

Paul Magrath, Barrister

Births, Marriages & Deaths

DEATHS

MORRIS: Professor Peter, on 1 February, aged 51, after a short but devastating illness borne with great courage. Dear husband of Rosemary and son of Lucy and the late Robert Morris. Much loved by his family, many friends and colleagues. Funeral service at Chilwell Road Methodist Church, Beccles, at 11am on Monday 10 February followed by burial at Beccles Cemetery, Worthing Road. Family flowers only. Donations to Hayward House Hospice. The City Hospital, Nottingham.

Announcements for Gazette BIRTHS, MARRIAGES & DEATHS (Births, Adoptions, Marriages, Deaths, Memorial services, Wedding anniversaries, In Memoriam) should be sent in writing to the Gazette Editor, The Independent, 1 Canada Square, Canary Wharf, London E14 5DL, telephoned to 0171-293 2011 (answering machine 0171-293 2012) or faxed to 0171-293 2010, and are charged at £6.50 a line (VAT extra). OTHER Gazette announcements must be submitted in writing (or faxed) and are charged at £10 a line, VAT extra. They should be accompanied by a day-line telephone number.

ROYAL ENGAGEMENTS

The Prince of Wales, President, Bridesmaid in the Coronation, launched a new business campaign "Regeneration through Enterprise", at St James's Palace.

Changing of the Guard

The Household Cavalry, Memorial Banners were hoisted on the Queen's Life Guard at Whitehall, on 4 February. The Queen's Guard at Buckingham Palace, 11th and 12th Regiments of Foot Guards.

Birthdays

Mr Peter Allen, broadcaster, 51; Vice-Admiral Sir Peter Ashmore, 70; The Hon Sir Clive Bosom Bt, former MP, 79; Mr Jim Cunningham MP, 56; Dr PE Thompson Hancock, cancer specialist, 93; Lord Haslam, former chairman, British Coal, 74; Mr Russell Hoban, playwright and novelist, 72; Mr David Malouf, novelist, 63; The Hon Mrs Ray Michie MP, 63; Sir Stanley Newsam, MEP, 67; Sir Michael Nicholson, a Lord Justice of Appeal, Northern Ireland, 64; Dr James McIntosh Patrick, painter and engraver, 90; Mr Charles Pollard, Chief Constable, Thames Valley Police, 52; Mr William Ross MP, 61; Mr Richard Ryder MP, 48; Lord Shawcross QC, former Attorney-General, 95; Mr John Willan, former managing director, London Philharmonic, 54; Mr Norman Wisdom, actor and comedian, 82; Sir Christopher Zeeman, former Principal, Hertford College, Oxford, 72.

Anniversaries

Births: Pierre Cartel de Chamblain de Marivaux, playwright and novelist, 1688; Myles Birket Foster, painter, 1825; Jacques Prévert, poet and novelist, 1900; Death: Louis Elzevier, printer, 1617; Pompeo Girolamo Batoni, painter, 1787; Karen Carpenter, singer, 1953; Libera (Wladziu Valentini), entertainer, 1987. On this day: the secessionist states met at Montgomery, Alabama and formed the Confederate States of America, 1861; the command of the German Army was assumed by Adolf Hitler, 1938; Ceylon (later known as Sri Lanka) became an independent state, 1948; sweet rationing ended in Britain, 1953; the *Sunday Times* be-

used the first colour supplement in Britain, 1962; the world's largest hovercraft (165 tonnes) was launched at Cowes, 1968. Today is the Feast Day of St Andrew Corsini, Bishop, St Isidore of Pelusium, St Joan of Valois, St John de Brito, St Joseph of Leonesse, St Modan, St Nicholas Studies, St Phileas, St Rembert and St Theophilus the Penitent.

Lectures

National Gallery: Mari Griffith, "Fond Farewells (I): Redon, Olympia among the Flowers", 1pm. Tate Gallery: John McCracken talks about his work, 6.30pm. British Museum: Andrew Burnett, "The HSBC Money Gallery", 1.15pm. National Portrait Gallery: Simone Mathews, "French Influence and the British avant-garde, 1880-1920", 1.10pm. Exeter University: Anthony Wrang, "The Power of Electrochemistry", 1.10pm. Leicester University: Professor Richard Aldridge, "The Condoct Story: from microfossils to macroevolution", 5.15pm. Gresham College, Barnard's Inn Hall, London EC1: Professor Peter Hennessy, "Premiership 11: the somnambulant moderniser, Edward Heath 1970-74", 1pm.

Luncheons

Ministry of Defence Air Chief Marshal Sir John Willis, Vice-Chief of the Defence Staff, was the host at a Ministry of Defence luncheon held yesterday at Admiralty House, London SW1, in honour of Lt-Gen Ad van Baal, Vice-Chief of the Netherlands Defence Staff.

Dinners

Lord Mayor of Westminster The Lord Mayor of Westminster, Mr Robert Davies, and the Lady Mayoress, Miss Carole Franco, were the hosts at a dinner held yesterday evening at City Hall, London SW1. Among those present were: Mrs Samia Aghassian, Consul General of Egypt; Selma Maria Artam, Ambassador of Chile; and Señora Antonio Mr Fouad Agoubi, Ambassador of Jordan; and Mrs Agoubi; Dr Roy Chaudron-Matton, Ambassador of Venezuela; Mr John Corbet-Singleton, Mayor of Kensington and Chelsea; and Mrs Corbet-Singleton; Mr and Mrs David Garry; Mr and Mrs Nick Leake; Mr Simon Millett; Mrs Lucille Nemeth; The Hon Caroline Perry; Lord Renshaw; Sir John and Lady Samuelson; Mrs Rosalind Saville; Mr and Mrs Eric H. Serrin; Dr and Mrs J.S. Robin.

Appointments

Mr David Lloyd, to be Ambassador to the Republic of Slovenia. Mr David Smeaton, to be Ambassador to the Republic of Senegal and additionally Ambassador (non-resident) to the Republic of Guinea. Mr Michael Cook, to be British High Commissioner to the Republic of Uganda. Mrs Susan Raskin, to be a district judge, on the Western Circuit. Dr George Goldstein, to be Director of the Ashmolean Museum, Oxford. Mr Stephen Cox, to be Executive Secretary of the Royal Society. The Duke of Gloucester, to be Patron of the Royal Anthropological Institute. The Duchess of Gloucester, to be Patron of the Parkinson's Disease Society and the Royal School for the Blind Seaboard. The Rev Roger Hollings, to be Preacher to Gray's Inn.

Scandal of unfed NHS patients



Koljevic: ethnic cleansing

President, Slobodan Milosevic, the regional power broker. This turned out to be wishful thinking. Koljevic was always something of a political lightweight in the Bosnian Serb hierarchy and his hard-line rivals had no problems in edging him out of office. Following Bosnia's post-Communist elections, Plavsic emerged as the President of the Serbian Republic with Bosnia and Krajcinic became the Serb representative on Bosnia's collective presidency. Ironically, the relatively pragmatic Koljevic was left with no role to play on Bosnia's post-war political stage, while two of the most die-hard exponents of Bosnian Serb separatism were entrusted with trying to find an accommodation with their former Muslim and Croat enemies within the new partially reunited Bosnia. That irony was not lost on Koljevic himself. Disappointed in his expectations and reduced from Vice-President to the rank of a political adviser, he felt uncertain about his future, not knowing whether to stay on in the provincial obscurity of Pale, join his family in Belgrade or return to his place of birth in Banja Luka. His suicide ended these doubts.

Gabriel Partos

Nikola Koljevic, politician and English scholar: born Banja Luka, Yugoslavia 9 June 1936; Professor of Literature, University of Sarajevo 1965-92; Vice-President, Republika Srpska, 1992-96; married 1957 Milica Medic (one son, one daughter, and one son deceased); died Belgrade 25 January 1997.

The people who deny Holocaust

Cook finds the right recipe for Europe



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Probably we will stay out in the first wave; probably we will enter by 2002. That is how Robin Cook would like us to read his latest comments on British entry to a single currency. It sounds like a cautious compromise. It is. But don't knock it.

In the circumstances, the position that Labour is gradually carving out for itself on economic and monetary union is the most sensible available stance. In fact, it is the only tenable one. Kenneth Clarke must be wishing he could persuade the Conservative Party to endorse it too.

If monetary union is working well, and if the British economy is suffering by remaining outside a single currency bloc, then the chances are a Labour government will sign up to the euro. The Labour Party's door, in other words, is hesitantly half-open to the single currency.

view of the future. The evil-eyed wicked witch of the west, otherwise known as Tony Blair, is forcing a single currency on his hard-pressed munchkins. But the fearful lion accompanied by a brainless scarecrow and a heartless tinman are going to bound off down the yellow-brick-road and home to safety, far away from those nasty Europhile lefties.

Nonsense. There isn't anywhere for Britain to escape to. Monetary union is happening. It will almost certainly happen on schedule, since the French and German political elites are so committed to it.

If it works, and that is still a big if, then it is hardly plausible that Britain could stay out for ever. Imagine Europe in 2010. Inside a large single currency bloc are Germany, France, the Benelux countries, Austria, Italy, Spain, Scandinavia, the Czech Republic, Hungary... the list goes on. Within the huge eurozone, businesses don't have to bother their heads about currency speculation. They don't have to worry that the cash they pay their producers with will suddenly rise in value compared to the cash they collect from their customers across the border, squeezing their profit margins beyond their control. Across the Channel, however, things look rather different. Companies have to add to the hassle and cost of sending goods across the sea to European customers, the unpredictability of currency changes

and the higher interest rates that Britain would probably suffer. It does not take a Toyota chief to work out the best place for future investment. And the British people, watching the disparities grow, are likely to opt for a single currency too.

So Robin Cook is right to say that if EMU is successful, a Labour government would find it hard to keep Britain out. But he is equally right to prevaricate about going in as part of the first wave.

Consider the timetable. Joining up would require some quick thinking, quick decision-making, and quick per-

suading, by a fresh and untested Labour government. Parliamentary timetables would be entirely clogged up by Euro legislation. A new Blair government would have to risk going to the polls in a referendum on a single currency, after hardly any time to make a positive case for joining. Although the British public may accept the euro if they can see it working, they are too conservative and too sceptical for a leap in the dark.

Moreover, serious problems with the euro remain. The risk of economic crisis in Europe under a single currency remains considerable. The low interest

rates currently needed by Germany would be hopelessly inflationary if applied to Britain, which came out of recession earlier than the Continent. If structured badly, the single currency could lead to terrible persistent unemployment in some parts of the union, provoking political tensions that could destroy the entire project. Waiting to allow further economic convergence - and that means real integration of European markets, not just similar inflation rates and government borrowing requirements - has a lot to be said for it.

And then, of course, there is the democratic deficit. Signing up blind to an economic system which provides almost no democratic accountability for policy decisions which have a huge impact on people's lives would be a mistake. A British government which is not opposed to a single currency in principle should be fighting fiercely to influence and reform the EMU project before taking the plunge. So Mr Cook's position makes sense: accept the difficulties of staying out for good, point out the reasons for staying out in the short term, and keep all options open along the way.

The best aspect of his position, however, is that if a Labour government is elected, we will have a proper discussion about the merits of the single currency. With the Conservatives in power we cannot have that argument.

because any plausible Tory leader would have to suppress the full range of views within his or her own party. Out of power, Tories would be free to give full voice to their views, pro-, anti-, and not entirely sure.

Robin Cook, Gordon Brown and Tony Blair, and everyone else, would have plenty of time to listen to Mr Portillo and Mr Clarke arguing, while finding out (because they might start talking to us) what the French and Germans are really up to.

A game of two bureaucracies

In rugby, cricket and of course football, the age of the gentleman amateur is supposed to be over. Welcome to the paid pro. But when it comes to governing these sports, especially inside those committees with international reach, we don't match up. That the Germans should be trying to stitch up the World Cup in 2006 says only that they are good at playing the game of committees and cronies. Instead of meaning, the English should get their act together, lobbying hard, nobbling opponents there. That there is intense rivalry between FIFA and UEFA makes this game all the more open. Let's get on and play it, with greater skill.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Scandal of unfed NHS patients

Sir: Sadly we must support your report that many frail older people are not getting the food and drink which they need while in hospital ("NHS patients being left to starve", 3 February). Here are a few quotations from many letters and phone calls we have received:

"My father when in hospital told me that he had not eaten for two days because food had been placed out of reach. Thereafter I made sure I visited at the necessary times."

"When I visited my mother the lady in the bed next to her grabbed my hand and said 'Stay with me as I am so hungry - if they see someone here they feed me, otherwise they don't'."

"My mother, 92 and very handicapped physically and mentally. Unable to turn herself over in bed or sit up. After lunch, day after day, and in the best were my mother's cup of tea was left on the locker. My mother was also diabetic and frequently thirsty. It upset me that she could see the drink but was unable to reach it. Mentally and physically she was not capable of asking for help."

The problem is far too widespread to be blamed on the shortcomings of particular nurses (if indeed feeding patients is still their responsibility). There appears to be an organisational breakdown, with meals now being delivered and collected by catering staff, with no clear arrangements as to who is responsible for helping people who are too physically or mentally frail to feed themselves, nor staffing time allowed to give priority to helping them. In addition, equipment for helping people feed themselves is no longer readily available in wards, but is kept in occupational therapy departments with forms and sometimes internal payments necessary to access it.

Our organisation is one for relatives and friends of older people in homes and in the few remaining hospital long-stay wards. Hospitals are not therefore our prime focus, but it is a national disgrace that this problem can exist, especially when one considers that some of the most vulnerable will not have been eating properly before their admission.

JENNY STILES
Director
The Relatives Association
London WC1

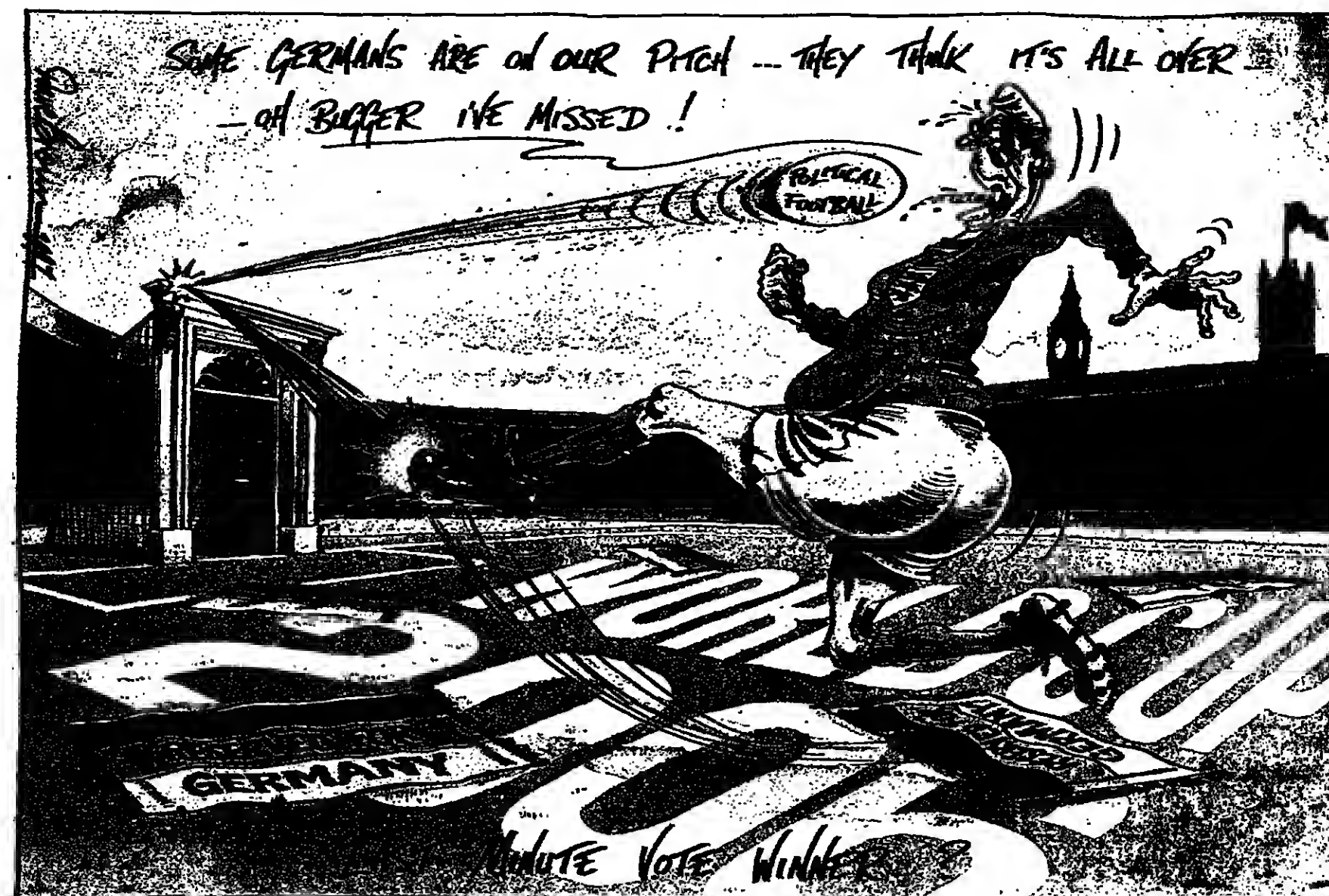
The people who deny Holocaust

Sir: I am generally against censorship, but there are two aspects of the Holocaust controversy ("Blair may make denial of Holocaust an offence", 30 January) which need our attention.

The first is that not only do claims that such mass atrocities never occurred cruelly insult the memory of those who died, but the millions of bereaved relatives are publicly classed as liars.

The second point is that those who champion hatred of whole races find support and comfort.

When researching in the Johannesburg public library in the 1960s, I found that probably the first editor of any newspaper of any Allied nation to spread the calumny about the Holocaust victims was the editor of the official newspaper of the pro-apartheid Afrikaner Nationalist Party. The newspaper was *Die Transvaler*. The date was April 1945 - before the European war had even ended. The first Nazi death camps had recently been discovered. The editor claimed that they were fakes erected and filmed



by Hollywood in order to "besmirch" the name of the German people.

That editor was Dr Hendrik Verwoerd, later to become South Africa's most racist Prime Minister, and the architect of the neo-Nazi apartheid policy.

LEN CLARKE
Uxbridge, Middlesex

Sir: I agree with Antony Lerman that "criminalising Holocaust denial would be a mistake" (article, 29 January). He cites a number of past wars of genocide, but overlooks the most recent: Bosnia.

Throughout the four years of Bosnia's war, the Western media persisted in providing space for the lies and distortions of the pro-Serb camp of genocide deniers, which includes MPs and Western government officials. Many like myself, during my stay in Britain, had to put up with such fabrications as "Muslims shelling their own people".

"The so-called victims of mass rape are making it all up" and "The Serbs are saving Europe from the threat of Islamic fundamentalism".

For those of us who have been advocating Bosnia's right to defend its very existence, it was tempting to demand the criminalisation and censorship of our opponents. Instead, we sought to confront and expose their wicked myths.

If we start denying people their right to free expression, where do we draw the line? Why not, for example, Salman Rushdie's *The Satanic Verses*?

DR SALAH EZZ
Faculty of Engineering
Cairo University
Egypt

from such people we enter on a slippery slope. If we justify invoking the criminal law on the grounds that this is very important, on what leg do we stand should we wish to oppose an attempt by John Major to criminalise the view that unemployment has not fallen, or by Cardinal Winning to criminalise the view that abortion is not murder?

Moreover, we cannot be certain of any view if we are not free to test it. In reaching for the criminal law Tony Blair is showing the same fatal weakness for compulsion which he showed in his *Big Issue* interview. This weakness encourages me to believe that he deserves to join Margaret Thatcher amongst the great enemies of Liberalism.

EARL RUSSELL
Liberal Democrat Social Security Spokesman
House of Lords
London SW1

Telling point

Sir: I note with interest the much-heralded visit of our Foreign Secretary, Malcolm Rifkind, to Sweden to tell the Swedish people about his vision of Europe.

Is this the green light from our government for the foreign secretaries of the other 14 EU member states to come to Britain in the coming weeks to tell the British people about their vision of Europe?

PAULINE GREEN MEP
(London North, Lab)
Leader, Socialist Group in the European Parliament
Brussels

Struggle to open Whitehall files

Sir: The open government code of practice is indeed an important initiative which is helping some people to prise information out of government departments ("Access to official papers praised", 31 January). But it is not as helpful as it should be.

Ombudsman investigations are now taking four times longer to complete than originally intended. At the code's launch in 1994, the former Ombudsman set a 13-week target for dealing with complaints. The first year's cases averaged 15 weeks.

In 1995 the average investigation time doubled to 32 weeks, which the Ombudsman attributed partly to the complexity of the cases and partly to departmental obstructiveness. The most recent cases have taken even longer, 52 weeks on average, with one taking two full years. Even if information is ultimately supplied it may be too late to be of use.

For the second time, an Ombudsman investigation has been hampered by the Government's refusal to allow him to see relevant Cabinet committee papers. The Ombudsman's strong powers to send departmental files do not extend to these, and the Government recently rejected a select committee recommendation that they should.

MAURICE FRANKEL
Director,
The Campaign for Freedom of Information
London EC1

Edwardian ladies on skis

Sir: I was surprised to read in Stephen Goodwin's interview with Janet Adam Smith (31 January) that skiing in the Alps "was virtually unknown until the 1920s".

My parents joined a ski-ing party at Villars in about 1902. It was organised by Henry Lum, accompanied by his schoolboy son Arnold. I don't know if the ladies had taken ballgowns but they went down to dinner in their fur coats. It was the first time that Villars had been opened in the winter and there was no double glazing and probably not much heating.

I remember a photograph of my parents on their skis, my father in Norfolk suit and my mother in long Edwardian dress (and a huge hat, of course). In those days the Norwegian pronunciation of the word "ski" was used and my parents always talked about "shee-ing".

JOAN MEARNS
Marlborough, Wiltshire

High policy

Sir: Jonathan Glancey's piece "Upwardly Mobile" (31 January) raises interesting issues about the future development of London - in particular whether skyscrapers such as Sir Norman Foster's proposed Millennium Tower are an acceptable way forward.

In opposing this scheme the London Planning Advisory Committee (LPAC) is not setting

itself against tall buildings *per se*. Rather, we argue that development should be controlled within an agreed planning framework, so that central London sites are viewed as an organic entity rather than as piecemeal "opportunities".

Within such a planning framework LPAC believes there is a need for specific policy on tall buildings, since in the wrong place these can be dominant and intrusive on, rather than contribute to, the essential character of the capital.

Above all, as Mr Glancey rightly points out, we urgently need a directly elected London-wide authority. This is essential not only for architectural reasons, but also to plan for the social environmental and economic future success of Greater London and Londoners. Councillor NICKY GAVRON
London Planning Advisory Committee
London SW7

Bridleway rage

Sir: May I append in J Howells's concise elucidation of the legitimate usage of bridleways (letter, 28 January) my wish that legitimate users be more aware of one another's rights?

As a cross-country cyclist, I have frequent recourse to bridleways. I try to be sensitive to other users, particularly pedestrians, by adopting sensible speeds and giving suitable warnings. Unfortunately, many pedestrians seem to feel I have no right to cycle in their proximity. I have occasionally encountered surprising rudeness from apparently well-mannered individuals.

K J McLEAN
Dorchester

A nation addicted to traffic fumes

Sir: On my return to England after years abroad, one thing that struck me was the pall of traffic fumes that swathed every inner city I ventured into. The little lack of concern about this form of pollution I found disconcerting.

Now I have become wiser: it seems the English actually thrive on exhaust fumes. How else can one explain the widespread aversion among drivers to turning off the engines of their stationary vehicles while visiting cashpoints, rifling the contents of the boot or accompanying their offspring into schools?

This revelation is not mine alone. After reading your article on proposed changes to British air quality classifications (31 January), I realised that the canny Conservative government has reached the same conclusion. Air containing 150 parts per billion oxides of nitrogen is soon to be officially described as "very good". Let us hope our foresighted ministers have a veto ready to preempt any contradiction from those thirsome Europeans.

PETER SHAW
Nottingham

Keynes the polite Alf Garnett

Sir: Further to Diane Coyle's account of the alleged racism of John Maynard Keynes ("A Keynesian view on race warfare", 31 January), I realised that the canny Conservative government has reached the same conclusion. Air containing 150 parts per billion oxides of nitrogen is soon to be officially described as "very good". Let us hope our foresighted ministers have a veto ready to preempt any contradiction from those thirsome Europeans.

LEONARD MIAL
Tapton, Buckinghamshire

Sir: Your article describes the manuscript in question, Keynes's essay *Population*, as unpublished. The John Maynard Keynes Papers in King's College, Cambridge, including this essay, were published by Chadwyck-Healey in 1993, on microfilm, and have been purchased by libraries around the world.

JOHN RUSSELL
Chadwyck-Healey Ltd
Cambridge

First-class cold

Sir: Colin Dunn inquires about "cold etiquette" (31 January). The most satisfactory result for all concerned would be for him to offer to up-grade the young lady's ticket to first class. Mr Dunn can then sit in a (relatively) germ-free environment and the young lady can nurse her cold in comfort in what is invariably an almost empty carriage.

JOHN RIDGWAY
Birmingham

Fuel for the Sun

Sir: Why not fire nuclear waste, in small regular consignments, into the Sun? ("New doubt over nuclear dump", 1 February) Once you've compensated for the Earth's motion it's downhill all the way. And the Sun, which is an enormous nuclear furnace easily capable of swallowing whole planets, would make good use of it.

S D C GOSTLER
Sedgeclerew
Hereford and Worcester

Post letters to Letters to the Editor, and include a daytime telephone number.
Fax: 0171-293 2056; e-mail: letters@independent.co.uk.
E-mail correspondents are asked to give a postal address. Letters may be edited for length and clarity.

Obstacles on the road to stopping another Drumcree



Donald MacIntyre

A planned commission on disputed march routes in Northern Ireland looks set for deadlock

It isn't every day that a report commissioned by the British government quotes Louis MacNeice, Seamus Heaney and — with stunning appropriateness, given that the subject is Northern Ireland — a remark by Rabindranath Tagore to the effect that leadership in a diverse society is weak and harmful if it is based on consolidating differences. But then the report of the Independent Review of Parades and Marches is an unusual document.

It was set up under the vice-chancellor of Oxford University, Dr Peter North, last August in the shattering aftermath of the events at Drumcree. In proposing a powerful new commission which would adjudicate over disputed march routes, it has sought to do something limited and practical but none the less ambitious to avoid a repeat of last year's catastrophe. Then, the Orange Order, by sheer force of numbers, persuaded the RUC to reverse its ruling against a march down the Catholic Garvaghy Road in Portadown. The aim for North was to restore some of the faith in the British state which drained away from the nationalist minority — middle-class political Catholics included — immediately after that decision.

It was a carefully balanced review. David Trimble, the Ulster Unionist leader, claimed in the Commons last Thursday to be "amazed" that there was no reference in the report to the IRA or Sinn Féin or "to those elements that are associated with them which have used the occasions to foment serious public disorder..." He was taking a liberty with the facts. The inuendo that Dr North and his team were innocents abroad, unaware of protestant insecurity or Sinn Féin intimidation, simply doesn't wash. The report explicitly points out that "Unionist experience of suffering at the hands of the Provisional IRA... [has] played a large part in the widespread sense of anger felt by members of the Loyal Orders against the residents' groups which oppose parades." It notes that many residents' associations are indeed single-issue groups set up since the ceasefire; it even favours contrasts some of these with the Ardoyne residents group, set up in 1973 and with a constitution requiring a member from each street on its committee. Furthermore, it proposes, as its first principle, that the "right to peaceful free assembly should (with certain qualifications) be protected". What the report also does, however, is accept the pain and fear inflicted by a minority of the Orange parades on ordinary Catholics — and that the exercise of that right should "take account of the likely effect on their relationships with other parts of the community..."

The Unionists are on weak ground in opposing this stipulation, which is perhaps why Mr Trimble didn't overtly try to do so in the Commons. It's not as if North can be said to be part of some covert shuffle towards a united Ireland. The Unionists have claimed that because under Margaret Thatcher's Anglo-Irish agreement, Dublin has a right to nominate members of public bodies in Northern Ireland, it will help to determine the composition of the commission. But the appointments remain firmly in the hands of the British Secretary of State, and anyway the Irish government has already indicated that it would not even nominate to the commission. In fact North is settlement-neutral; it seeks instead to inject an element of the mutual respect between the two traditions in Northern Ireland which every serious politician insists, at least

in public, is necessary whatever its future. And each failure of the constitutional process, like the Government's refusal to commit itself to the most fundamental recommendation of North, threatens to strengthen the standing of Sinn Féin in nationalist areas at the expense of the SDLP.

It now looks as if Sir Patrick Mayhew, the Northern Ireland Secretary, faced with what could be the last important decision of his political career, was keen to move more decisively and faster than he was allowed to do. The pro-Unionist Lord Cranborne-Michael Howard axis on the Cabinet's Northern Ireland Committee were apparently doubtful about handing over the role of adjudicating on marches to a new commission. The Ulster Unionist leadership did nothing to dispel ministerial fears that immediate legislation on North might just tempt the party to vote for the potentially fatal no-confidence motion that Labour will certainly consider tabling in the event of a Tory defeat in the Writal election. For a mix of these reasons, therefore, the Government decided not to commit itself on the clear North recommendation that the commission should have powers to adjudicate, if necessary, on whether a parade should go ahead. Once the Government had decided to "consult" for eight weeks on a report which was itself the product of exhaustive consultation, Sir Patrick privately made unusually strenuous efforts to preserve Labour's support. And Labour was faced with an unenviable decision: Mo Mowlam did indeed urge Sir Patrick to move quickly last week. But by attacking the Government outright, as the Liberal Democrats honourably did, it might have at once alienated the Ulster Unionists, jeopardised the extremely fragile talks process, and given the Conservative Party a convenient excuse to end bipartisanship in opposition after the election, all without seeing a commission in place for the marching season.

Labour now can only press Sir Patrick — and Ms Mowlam will be meeting him soon — to move as quickly as possible in appointing the commission so that an incoming government can legislate immediately to give it the powers North wants. But the portents are not good. If the general election isn't until 1 May, the sharply adversarial climate generated by the local authority elections in Northern Ireland three weeks later could make immediate legislation difficult even if Labour wins. It would be a brave politician who would make Drumcree 1997 the first critical decision for the new commission, without it being tested earlier in the marching season. The threat that would confront an incoming Labour government could yet be a repeat of last summer's events.

And the report is eloquently factual on the trail of devastation left by Drumcree. You can only measure the financial costs, but those numbers themselves testify to the human suffering that underlies them: £10m in police overtime; £25m in criminal damage claims; £4.5m shortfall in the Northern Ireland Housing Executive costs of purchasing houses "which the occupants have been obliged to leave following the tensions of the summer" and a "dramatic" increase in the number of families homeless as a result of intimidation. At the weekend Dr Mowlam tried to give an incoming Labour government, if there is one, a little more leeway in the peace process, by appearing to hint in an interview with the *Dublin Sunday Tribune* that it might impose slightly less prohibitive conditions on Sinn Féin entering all-party talks. But the problems are piling up.

Scaring mothers? It's Panorama's bit of fun

by Polly Toynbee



Working women have always suffered from flawed and facile attacks on them

Puzzlemeat — to put it politely — greeted the social survey on which *Panorama* based last night's programme "Missing Mum" (working title, perhaps, "I Blame the Mothers"). The programme used an unpublished survey by Professor Margaret O'Brien of the University of North London, which purports to prove that full-time working mothers damage their children.

Replete with emotive scenes, the programme showed how much worse children of full-time working mothers do in exams. The research was based on a study of 600 two-parent families in Barking and Dagenham, a largely white community with mothers working mainly in lower clerical grades. But social scientists were puzzled by findings that contradict so many studies in Britain and America.

Several were surprised that a whole *Panorama* was largely based on research that is not yet published, has not yet been submitted to a reputable journal of social research or subjected to the usual rigorous peer review process. (The programme also drew on a small Californian study of 100 families.)

Panorama's press release hyped the research to guarantee it widespread newspaper coverage: "Women who juggle a full-time job with motherhood may jeopardise their children's future." It claimed 25 per cent of the children of women with full-time jobs gained no GCSEs, while only 11 per cent of children from families where mothers work only part-time gained no qualifications. Fascinating and frightening findings, especially for the 21 per cent of us guilly mothers who do work full time.

However, there was something not quite right about that press release. It gave figures for part-time and full-time mothers, but what of the children of stay-at-home mothers? Surely they must do best of all? The press release did not mention them at all, which was odd. Even odder, when I acquired the programme script, it did not mention them until page 21 of its 25 pages — and then only in a brief graphic. Why? Because the children of stay-at-home non-working mothers do worst of all. The script rapidly dismisses this by saying they are poorer families. Ah, so it is more complicated, perhaps.

Of course it is. No study of human behaviour is ever simple — and if it looks simple it is usually fatally flawed. There are so many variables, so many subtle causations. This is unpublished work, unscrutinised by other professional sociologists and unfunded, as its author, flustered by all the alarmist headlines, hastened to emphasise yesterday. So we can only here ask all the questions Professor O'Brien's peers would ask before it was published in a reputable journal.

This is a survey of higher manual and lower clerical grade women living in Barking and Dagenham. How can you extrapolate the experiences of these families and apply them to, say, affluent families with access to the best nurseries, nannies, or indeed, a boarding school like Eton? Of course the programme did — showing an anxious very successful business woman who had now gone back to part-time working to be with her children. (Oddly enough, this very same mother must be something of a professional BBC interviewee as a typical middle class mum: when I worked there I once interviewed the very same woman for a BBC item about child benefit.) If maternal absence is the most vital factor, wouldn't boarding school children do worst? If, on the other hand, maternal absence is only one of many indicators of success and failure, are you measuring the right thing?

Many studies show that high quality early nursery education is a key indicator of later academic success. Indeed yesterday the Institute of Child Health stressed its own research showing that children from good day-care do best of all. Does Professor O'Brien know anything about what day-care these children had when they were young? No, she admitted to me, she does not. She has studied them only between the ages of 14 and 16. She cannot sub-divide those who had good care from those who had bad, it might show that quality of care, not hours with mother is more significant.

Does she know how much time fathers spent with these children? (They are all two-parent families.) No, she says, she does not. Does she have a comparison of the total family income of both the part-time and the full-time working mother families? No, she says she does not. In fact, there are so many more questions to ask, you can add in your own here.

If you would like to consider the complexity of such surveys, take the work being done by Charlie Lewis, of the University of Lancaster, a previous co-author with Professor O'Brien. Investigating all the available studies, he found that paternal absence has a devastating effect on families. Children did worse in all respects. But once he corrected for the poverty effect of

Blaming the mothers is a good populist game — either these hard-working mothers or, as in a previous disgraceful *Panorama*, stay-at-home single mothers swamping off the state. This programme is deeply politically incorrect in an era when most mothers work. But what if it is just plain incorrect?

This is not just an academic issue. This research will remain in the popular imagination for a decade or more. People will quote it to one another for years to come, even if it were to be debunked at some later date. It will make many families anxious and cause them to make wrong choices. For instance, mothers who decide to abandon their careers may find themselves non-working lone parents later, and children of non-working lone parents do far worse than children of single mothers who work. Mothers already think they are to blame for their children's character defects or failure to fulfill their potential. To be less than perfect is, of course, to be human and so is having a less than ideal mother. How many ways can a mother fail her child? How many to count.

But now step back a pace or two and ask this question. Supposing Professor O'Brien's research is water-tight, what exactly are we supposed to be so worried about? Are we, as a society, worried that some children have less good opportunities than others? Do we worry that life is unfair to some children? If so, just look at the chasm that divides the children of the middle classes from those of the growing wretched underclass. Where is the *Panorama* blasting the monstrous inequities which cause large numbers of children to fall from the day they draw breath?

But that is a boring old story. Far more fun to frighten the life out of the middle classes by suggesting Freddy and Fiona may not do so well at school because their mother is running British Steel (or indeed, like the mother who made this programme, staying up all night in the edit suite of *Panorama*).

Change is frightening and there has never been a social revolution as profound as women's liberation. Where is it all heading? There will be many more scare stories for a couple of generations until we get used to women's freedom. And often it is the women themselves who are most frightened by what we have done. But we have nothing to fear but fear itself — and the scare-mongers who whip it up.

Europe is Britain's business

The Government's chilly attitude to the EU is making companies such as Toyota think twice about investing in Britain. That's why, says Christopher Mackenzie, businessmen like him are looking forward to a Labour victory

A quick glance at any map of the world shows that Britain belongs in Europe. And a quick glance at our trade figures shows why we should be glad of this geographical accident. British business benefits greatly from the membership of the European Union. Around 60 per cent of our visible exports are already to our European partners.

We sell more goods to Germany than to the United States or Japan, more to the Netherlands than all the Asian tiger economies together, more to France than to the Commonwealth. The single market gives our firms access to more than 370 million consumers in the European Union, with massive new markets on the horizon through enlargement. Twelve countries are keen to join, bringing in another 100 million people. It is a surprise that there are some people in the UK who have any doubts about our membership.

But already the EU's GDP of £5,350bn makes it a bigger trade bloc than NAFTA, its North American counterpart. It is a larger integrated economy than the US and contains five of the world's richest countries. For British businesses today, this is not foreign territory. This is our home market.

Being a major partner in this powerful trading bloc gives us clout in the world. Together with our partners, we have much greater influence on global trade talks and negotiations to shape the world economy than we ever could standing alone. It allows us to argue

for improvements in benefit all our firms and businesses. This massive market is the principal reason why Britain has proved such a powerful magnet for inward investment, investment which we all agree is vital to our future prosperity.

You don't need to worry about the nuances of translation of Toyota president Hiroshi Okuda's remarks last week to get his general meaning. It was very clear. It is a threat to jobs. Inward investors are unhappy about Britain's increasingly sour relationship with our European partners and are worried that this relationship is getting worse. I share their concerns.

It is a message which is increasingly echoing through many boardrooms in Britain. They know our economic future is inextricably tied to Europe, and to Europe's prosperity. Tying Britain off to the Far East is an alternative only for the fevered imagination of the most diehard anti-European.

They fear the drift of the Government under the pressure of Tory Euroscepticism. They are deeply worried about the growing whispers from Conservative ranks about renegotiation or even withdrawal. Those supporting these views are getting bolder by the day.

Divisions in the Tory ranks were all too evident last week when John Major was unable to persuade his own candidates to sign up to his European policy at the coming election. It sends a message to business that the Eurosceptic wing of the Tory party is already too powerful for Mr Major to

control. It is a message which reinforces the view that Britain is lacking strong leadership at a crucial time for our future. It is no wonder that business is concerned about what might happen if the Tories are re-elected.

These fears contrast to the positive message on Europe offered by the Labour leader, Tony Blair. It is a message of constructive partnership which is winning many friends in the business world.

It does not mean Britain should be a pushover in Europe. There are tough negotiations ahead. Every citizen of every EU member country expects their government to fight to protect and promote their interests. Even Tories must accept that Mr Blair will be no pushover.

But business wants the Government to be more positive towards Europe, less reluctant and half-hearted, to start co-operating with our partners on common and shared goals. No matter what the present Government says, this is not the impression it leaves. This damages our relationship with the other countries in Europe. It damages our chances of getting what we want. But it also has a direct impact on British firms.

Ask businessmen and women who spend much time on the Continent and they will tell you there is fall-out from the constant bickering with Europe. The abrasive tenor and tone of the Conservative attitude to Europe has meant some British firms have to overcome increasing suspicion when looking for business abroad. Business

is competitive enough without our own Government putting new obstacles in our path.

Above all, what British business wants is immediate action to complete the single market and ensure existing rules are properly enforced. Tony Blair's pledge to open up the European market in gas and electricity, telecommunications and financial services is vitally important for British jobs. Our firms are well placed to take advantage of the opportunities a genuine single market would bring.

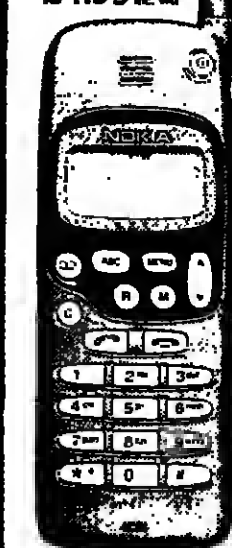
The Labour leader has made clear that this will be a priority for him in Europe. I believe that, because of the positive approach he intends to take to these negotiations, he has a much greater chance of making progress than any Conservative premier. Mr Major or his successor would be constantly looking over his shoulder to see if he could command a majority of his own backbenchers. A divided party could prevent him acting in the national interest.

It is for this reason that I believe this country needs a change of government. It is for this reason that I believe a Labour government under Tony Blair offers a brighter future for Britain. And it is why I believe all companies that trade in the global economy, or intend to in the future, will be better served by a Labour government after the next election.

The writer is president of GE Capital Europe Ltd, a subsidiary of the General Electric Company, USA.

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BUSINESS & CITY DEPUTY EDITOR: MICHAEL HARRISON

Institutions talk tough on ballot by ScotAm

Nic Cicutti

Three UK fund managers with thousands of Scottish Amicable policies in their investment trusts are to meet next week to discuss voting down the company's plans for a two-stage demutualisation unless it calls its ballot of members.

The three firms, Scottish Value Management (SVM), BZW and Kleinwort Benson want ScotAm to discuss takeover offers from various bidders, including Abbey National which declared its hand last week, before putting proposals to a vote.

Brian Moretti, fund manager of SVM's Life Offices Opportunities Trust, said yesterday: "Abbey National has not got detailed enough figures to put a proper deal on the table. It needs more information before it can do so."

"If Scottish Amicable puts its proposals forward [before then] it is running a very serious danger of having them rejected. That would put its management in a very difficult position."

Simon White, director at Kleinwort Benson Investment Funds, said his company would look carefully at any ScotAm proposals.

His comments came as the increasingly embattled ScotAm board restated its policy of going ahead with existing plans, involving an immediate £75m bonus to policyholders if they vote for de-mutualisation. Up to £400m might be available at flotation in three to five years.

Abbey National's deal involves about £1.4bn, of which at least £400m would go to shareholders in cash or shares, with the rest being paid for the value of the underlying life fund.

Meanwhile, the likelihood of other bidders entering the race increased as it emerged that at least one company, the

Dutch insurer Fortis, has contacted ScotAm to offer talks. Fortis refused to comment. ING, the Dutch owner of Barings, also refused to comment on suggestions that it too contacted the Scottish company.

Experts also pointed to Prudential and NatWest as preparing to mount an assault. Abbey National yesterday prepared to step up its takeover battle for ScotAm by threatening to take the campaign to the insurer's 1.1 million policyholders if a ballot goes ahead.

Abbey National's tactics include a massive media publicity blitz, and mailing as many policyholders as possible through the client lists of independent financial advisers. Abbey is also prepared to demand ScotAm provide it with a full list of policyholders so it can mail them details of its offer.

A spokeswoman said: "We are hoping to be able to deal with the management there in a friendly way and we hope it won't be necessary to do this."

Lazard Brothers, Abbey's advisers, yesterday wrote formally to SBC Warburg, ScotAm's counterpart, to formally table a bid for the company.

John Nelson, vice-chairman at Lazard's, said in a letter to Jock Birnie, his opposite number at SBC Warburg, that Abbey National's offer was "substantially more attractive" than his own proposals.

"Accordingly, we are strongly requesting you to defer sending your proposals to policyholders with the Scottish Amicable board's recommendation."

A ScotAm spokesman replied: "They're asking for privileged access to information before policyholders who must get that information, see the deal of what we're offering and at that time Abbey can make a proper judgement of its offer."

BR sells a slice of nostalgia as memorabilia shop is bought out by management



Sign of the times. Stock (pictured above) from BR's railway memorabilia shop, Collectors' Corner, which was sold off yesterday to its management under the rail privatisation programme. The shop, located near to London's Euston station, sells everything from locomotive name plates and insignia to old timetables and railwaymen's pocket watches. The shop is part of National Railway Supplies,

which has been bought by its management and the car parts group, Unipart. The 300 staff of NRS, which has a turnover of £88m and supplies signalling, telecommunications, track and other rail products, have been invited to apply for shares at a cost of about £400 each. Cliff Webb, who joined NRS as managing director five years ago after a career in the steel and engineering industries,

says the plan is to grow revenues substantially, rather than relying on its existing contracts with Railtrack and the railway infrastructure maintenance companies. The management team, which will own 51 per cent of NRS, beat off competition from the US rail equipment firm Harmon Vaughan and the facilities management group Serco.

Photograph: Nicola Kurtz

MTM's founder jailed for two years

Jill Treanor

Richard Lines, the founder and former chairman of MTM, which was once the UK's second-largest fine chemicals company, was jailed for two years yesterday for fraud which wiped £250m off the company's share price in 1992.

Lines, 60, was also disqualified from acting as a company director for five years. Thomas Baxter, 45, the former finance director, was jailed for six months and disqualified from acting as a company director for two years.

Jailing Lines, Judge Grigson said at the Old Bailey: "Ambition motivated him, not greed, but he persistently and deliberately proved to be dishonest."

The judge told Baxter he had failed in his duty. Lines, of Great Ayrton, Cleveland, set up MTM in 1984 after 11 years at ICI and before that a 15-year career in the Royal Navy. Through MTM he made millions and in 1991 he took home £3m after selling shares in the company. He was also awarded an OBE.

The company commissioned a book to tell the story of its rapid growth for which Sir John Harvey-Jones, the former head of ICI, wrote the foreword. MTM was floated on the Stock Exchange in 1986 after which it made a series of global acquisitions to become, by 1991, the second-largest fine chemicals company in the UK.

The two men were convicted in December on charges brought by the Serious Fraud Office and North Yorkshire Police fraud squad. Lines was convicted of two offences of conspiring to account

falsely and one offence of making misleading, false or deceptive statements. Baxter was convicted of one count of conspiracy to account falsely and another of making misleading, false or deceptive statements. He was acquitted on a further account of conspiring to account falsely.

The SFO's investigation began after the collapse of MTM's share price in March 1992 from 225p to as low as 25p. Baxter and Lines lied to analysts and investors about the true state of the company's financial

health just days before it issued a profits warning.

The prosecution also argued that Lines took advantage of the previously buoyant share price to fund the acquisition of Hardwick Chemicals in 1990 and by selling shares after key announcements containing false information as to the profitability of the company.

"Mr Lines' elaborate schemes to falsely enhance the company's share price led to its collapse with a loss of £250m," said Stephen Myers, the SFO lawyer in charge of the case.

Clarke set to clash with Bank

Diane Coyle
Economics Editor

Mixed signals on the economy set the scene for a further clash between the Chancellor of the Exchequer and the Governor of the Bank of England at tomorrow's monetary meeting.

Manufacturing activity bounced back in January despite the recent strength of the pound, and a jump in cash in circulation signalled buoyant retail spending. On the other hand, more manufacturers were cutting prices than raising them last month, while Halifax reported a dip in house prices.

The City expects Kenneth Clarke to continue to resist Eddie George's advice to raise base rates. Their meeting comes a week ahead of the publication of the Bank's quarterly Inflation Report, which is likely to cause irritation in the Treasury by insisting on the longer-term inflationary dangers if the economy grows too fast.

Mr Clarke has continued to insist that there is not much difference between his views and the Governor's but the four-month disagreement has led the finance to conclude that politics has overtaken policy. "We expect base rates to remain on hold until the other side of the election," Adam Cole at James Capel said.

Bank of England figures reported a jump of 0.8 per cent in the amount of cash in circulation in January, the biggest since Euro 96 boosted spending in June. The increase is likely to signal strong consumer spending during the month, even though the link between cash and consumer spending can be erratic.

There was evidence that consumer demand is booming manufacturing in the supply of purchasing managers. The "Institute of Purchasing and Supply (Cips)" reported a strong surge in activity combined with falling prices. Net orders - both domestic and export - rose faster than the previous month, but the advance home orders were much higher. Output and employment also increased more quickly, the latter showing its biggest jump nearly two years. "The pace of manufacturing activity is picking up," Peter Thomson, director-general of Cips, said.

But at the same time, manufacturers cut prices that raised them, thanks in large part to the effect of the strong pound on import prices. A separate measure yesterday that will allow the Chancellor to downplay the inflationary dangers was news of a small dip in house prices. The Halifax house price index fell 0.6 per cent after an unusually big 1.1 per cent increase in December.

Halifax said last month's fall was probably an adjustment in the previous month. The annual rate of house price inflation slowed from 8.4 to 7.1 per cent.

Comptons warns E technol

Ivory & Sime in bid spotlight as chief quits

Magnus Grimond

The recent staff turmoil at Ivory & Sime, the Edinburgh fund management group, came to a head yesterday with the ousting of managing director Colin Hook by Caledonia Investments, the group's largest shareholder.

Mr Hook is being replaced immediately by Sir David Kinloch, deputy chief executive of Caledonia, the main investment vehicle of the wealthy Cayzer family which owns a 29 per cent stake in Ivory & Sime.

The shares added 2p to 246p on hopes that the move makes

it more likely that the group will become a takeover target.

Mr Hook was appointed by Caledonia two years ago following its original investment to sort out Ivory & Sime after a period of staff departures and poor investment performance. But he quickly invoked the ire of many fund managers by removing them from the board and stamping what was said to be an autocratic management style on the group.

The rising discontent has seen a string of staff departures in the last few months, culminating in the recent announcement that a large part of the UK equities team was leaving to set

up on their own, including Mark Tyndall, the head of the department, and John Dodd, leader of the smaller companies team.

Sir David, who was until yesterday non-executive chairman, said investigations he had instigated after his increasing concern over the defections at senior level had all pointed in the same direction.

Mr Hook had done an excellent job in the early part of his tenure at the group, "but people found it difficult to get on with him and it affected staff morale. I talked to him over the weekend and he offered to resign, which I accepted."



Colin Hook: His offer to resign was accepted

He dismissed suggestions that there had been a mutiny among staff still remaining at Ivory & Sime and said Caledonia had no plans to sell its stake.

C&W set to pull out of German telecom tie-up

Chris Godsmark
Business Correspondent

Cable & Wireless may issue legal proceedings against RWE and Veba, the two partners in its German telecommunications alliance, Vebacom, as speculation increases that the British group is to sever its ties with the venture.

The dispute is believed to be over documents drawn up when RWE, a leading German utility, opted to join Vebacom, switching allegiances from its partnership with British Telecom's German ally, Viag. At the time the change was viewed as a coup

for C&W and Dick Brown, its recently appointed chief executive.

However, a source close to C&W said that German and English versions of the heads of agreement documents differed in key respects, leading to a protracted wrangle over the terms. The three partners have yet to sign contracts formally to include RWE in Vebacom, formed when C&W linked up with Veba in 1995.

The source said: "This is undoubtedly the worst deal the company has done so far. It's created all sorts of problems. For the past three weeks C&W's input has in effect been put on hold

while directors consider whether to issue legal proceedings."

The biggest stumbling block was over RWE's commitment to build a large-scale, DM8bn (£3bn) fixed telephones network. Analysts estimated that if C&W left, Vebacom it would not have to consolidate £50m of losses in its accounts.

A question mark now hangs over Veba's 10.4 per cent stake in C&W, acquired in the original Vebacom deal and worth £1.1bn. There is a suggestion is that Veba could sell the shares to Deutsche Telekom, allowing C&W to join Deutsche's "Global One" alliance.

£154m wiped off Dixons in share sale fall-out

Nigel Cole

Shares in Dixons lost more than 7 per cent of their value yesterday as the fall-out from Friday's share sale by Sir Stanley Kalms, chairman, continued and news of fresh "sell" advice emerged from a broker.

The 38p plunge to 479p knocked £154m off the company's value as investors reacted to City talk that Merrill Lynch had changed its recommendation on the stock from "hold"

to "reduce". Merrill Lynch's advice to its clients, which will be distributed in the next two days, follows the decision by Sir Stanley to sell a third of his holding in the company, raising £5.7m. This was just days after he criticised a broker at Greig Middleton for issuing "sell" advice to clients on Dixons shares.

Sir Stanley had originally said that he would complain to the Securities and Futures Authority about the note by Greig Middleton's Tony Cooper. Yesterday the company said it would not be pursuing any action. "As far as Dixons is concerned, this matter is closed," the company said.

Mr Cooper also stood firm: "We stand by our research note. This latest fall in the share price is nothing to do with us. It is Stanley Kalms who has done the damage."

Sir Stanley sold 1.1 million shares in the company late on Friday. No reason was given for the sale though it included op-

tions which had reached their expiry date. "There is always a furore when Sir Stanley sells shares in Dixons," a company spokesman said. "He did it for personal reasons, though I am not aware of the specific circumstances."

One City analyst said: "It does seem irrational to sell shares after attacking someone for advising people to do the same thing."

According to Greig Middleton, Dixons' shares are vulner-

able due to concerns over possible interest rate rises, the implementation of an insurance premium tax and estimates that the retail sector is nearing the peak of its cycle. Mr Cooper said that Dixons would experience a slower rate of sales growth and higher costs, delivering a "series of shocks" to the Dixons share price.

With Dixons shares at their lowest point since last summer the City was divided last night on its prospects. One analyst

said it might face a wave of negative sentiment as a result of the "bad odour" created by Sir Stanley's share sale. Others said the shares looked oversold. Dixons shares have been one of the best performing larger companies in the last two years rising from 202p in January 1995 to a high of 586p in October.

In a circular on 30 January Greig Middleton said that with some institutions taking profits "it will take something special to re-ignite interest."

STOCK MARKETS									
FTSE 100									
	Index	Close	Week's High	Change	1996/97 High	1996/97 Low	Vol	Div	Yield
FTSE 100	4275.80	+57.0	4275.80	3632.30	3.62				
FTSE 250	4595.40	+2.0	4610.00	4015.30	3.39				
FTSE 350	2115.90	+22.1	2115.90	1816.00	3.57				
FTSE SmallCap	2305.59	+13.2	2305.59	1954.08	2.94				
FTSE All-Share	2087.61	+21.0	2087.61	1791.92	3.52				
New York	6613.09	+116.6	6613.09	5032.94	1.99				
Tokyo	18330.01	+640.6	18330.01	17303.85	0.90				
Hong Kong	13321.79	-57.8	13321.79	10204.87	3.71				
Frankfurt	3035.15	+36.9	3035.15	2253.36	1.55				
Statistics as of 3 January									

INTEREST RATES

UK interest rates

UK benchmark yield curve 0-25 year gilt (%)

31/01/97
March '98

70 years or more correction

US interest rates

US benchmark yield curve 0-30 year treasury (%)

31/01/97
March '98

Source: Merrill Lynch

Money Market Rates

Index	1 Month	1 Year
UK	6.13	6.75
US	5.50	6.0
Japan	0.50	0.50
Germany	3.13	3.19
*Benchmark Indices		

Bond Yields *

Bond Index	Year Ago	Long Term	(%) Year Ago
UK	7.59	7.50	7.73
US	5.58	6.81	6.10
Japan	2.97	-	-
Germany	5.98	6.58	-

MAIN PRICE CHANGES

Risings - Top 3	From	To	W's Chg % Chg	Falls - Top 3	From	To	W's Chg % Chg
Bloomberg Int'l	1155	227.5	24.5	Premier Parnet	526.5	154	23.8
Bull Borneo Press	1365	223.5	19.5	Leptica	889	118	11.7

CURRENCIES									
\$/£									
	Index	Close	Week's High	Change	1996/97 High	1996/97 Low	Vol	Div	Yield
\$ (London)	1.8025	-2.61c	1.5189	0.6240	+2.8p	0.6584			
\$ (New York)	1.6140	-1.45c	1.5265	0.8196	+0.55p	0.6583			
DM (London)	2.6244	-2.50p	2.2412	1.8377	+1.09p	1.4872			
¥ (London)	194.544	+0.9688	182.031	¥ (London)	121.408	+2.52	106.880		
£ Index	94.4	-0.8	83.7	\$ Index	102.0	+1.0	95.4		
OTHER INDICATORS									
	Index	Close	Week's High	Change	1996/97 High	1996/97 Low	Vol	Div	Yield
Oil Brent	23.07	+0.17	18.71	154.4	+2.50p	150.6	19 Feb		
Gold	344.13	+3.0	413.40	GBP	108.9	+2.30p	105.7	27 Jan	
Gold	214.76	-0.26	273.48	Base Rates	-	6.00p	6.75	-	

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Merrill Lynch International
20 Farringdon Road, London EC1M 3NH

Murray Johnstone Limited
7 West Nile Street, Glasgow G1 2PX

Murray Johnstone Limited
30 Coleman Street, London EC2R 5AN

4 February 1997

Can you eat fungible bonds? Are they an Italian delicacy and if so do they turn mouldy if not consumed by their maturity date?

Glasgow G2 5TS 4 February 1997

Investment column, page 18

Acquisitive Ladbroke back in the frame as a good bet

THE INVESTMENT COLUMN

EDITED BY TOM STEVENSON

Ladbroke: at a glance

Market value: £2.73bn, share price 232.5p

	92	94	94	95	96	
Five-year record						
Turnover (£bn)	4.17	4.27	4.41	3.85	-	Share price pence
Pre-tax profits (£m)	5.20	51.4	230	95.4	163	280
Earnings per share (pence)	3.11	1.36	26.5	5.14	10.1	240
Dividends per share (pence)	11.2	6.0	6.0	6.0	6.0	220
						200
						180
						160
						140
						120

It's been a busy, and on all fronts satisfactory, year so far for Ladbroke. After years of volatile financial performance, an ignominious and now almost completed retreat from property, and an indifferent long-term performance for the shares, it looks as if the betting to hotels group's share price is set to break out into new territory after its recent strong run.

Yesterday's brace of announcements saw the gaming division snap up AR Dennis, the 114-strong London betting shop chain, for £31.3m and finally settle a dispute with Sainsbury over the price at which Ladbroke sold the Texas Homecare chain to the supermarket group.

The betting shops deal takes Ladbroke to a total of 1,925 outlets, comfortably ahead of its highest rival, William Hill, provides plenty of scope to improve Dennis's below-average margins and should be earnings-enhancing from the word go.

Importantly it strengthens the betting arm into an upswing in the operation's fortunes just as the industry is getting to grips with the problems, mainly caused by the introduction of the lottery, of 1995.

Bookies have cut their cost bases and introduced a new range of products, from betting on the Irish lottery to gambling on sports other

than horse racing, that make them much more viable, even in the face of the new midweek lottery which is due to be launched tomorrow. Dennis is a good fit for Ladbroke with only three shops having to be sold to satisfy the OFT.

Elsewhere, the arbitrator's decision that Ladbroke should only hand back to Sainsbury £9.3m of the £290m it was paid for Texas in 1995 was a better result than anyone at Ladbroke could have hoped for

and a great deal worse than the figure the supermarket had unwisely tipped analysts. That was the most important factor in yesterday's 4p share price rise to 233p.

Possibly of more investment importance in the short run, however, will be the credence given to weekend stories that ITT might be considering a bid for Ladbroke as part of its defence against the recent hostile tilt from Hilton Hotels Corporation, with which Ladbroke recently

struck a historic alliance. Analysts are sceptical about such a bid emerging but point out that, in what is expected to be a feisty defence, anything from ITT is possible.

What that doesn't achieve short term, forecasts of profits of £170m for the year to December 1996 and £215m this time should do in the longer run.

Achieving those numbers would put the shares on a prospective price/earnings ratio of 17, not too demanding compared with a growth rate in the mid-20 per cent range.

Deregulation is boosting the betting side, hotels are still enjoying a strong cyclical upswing and the shares remain good value.

November 1994. But executive chairman Hamish Bryce would probably rather the price strength had not been inspired by the news that Wassall, the acquisitive conglomerate led by émigrés from the Hanson empire, had picked up a 4.1 per cent stake.

The official line from Wassall is that this is just a normal investment which the group takes from time to time in the UK. The group has up to £80m to spare at any one time and putting it in the stock market is an alternative to parking it in the overnight money market.

Certainly, the investment is already showing a tidy profit. Having been picked up at 105p a share on Friday, the original £7.5m stake has put on £1m in the space of a week-end. Meanwhile Wassall's own market value went up £14.6m yesterday as its shares added 7.5p to 326p.

Wassall alights on TLG

TLG's shares have been out of favour since a profit warning last September, so yesterday's 13.5p jump to 118.5p should have been met with euphoria by the lighting manufacturer. After all, it is the first time for three months that the shares have been above the 115p at which they were launched in

would give some balance. Buying TLG now would allow Wassall to capture the gain from any upswing in the lighting group's currently depressed European markets.

In the meantime, assuming profits of around £22m this year, TLG's shares on a forward p/e of 15 look well worth holding, with the Wassall stake giving some protection from the downside.

Media tiddler strides ahead

The Media Business Group, the smallest of three specialist media buyers listed on the stock market, was floated as a penny stock in August 1995, priced at 3p. After announcing record figures yesterday it reached the dizzy heights of 8p before settling back to 7.5p, up a penny on the day.

Profits rose 42 per cent to £585,000 in the six months to the end of October, including a juicy £224,000 worth of interest earned on its prodigious cash flow. That increase was struck from a 29 per cent rise in sales over the same period in 1995 to £63m. Earnings per share

rose 33 per cent to 0.36p and the interim dividend has been raised by 17 per cent to 0.035p.

TMBG's recent client "win" include Appleby Group, RAC, Highland Mainline Railway, BESA, Eastern National Gas and, since the start of the year, Mothercare and Saga's European operations. Channel 5 and digital television offer new territory to exploit, although the growth of satellite and cable television advertising will initially be at the expense of terrestrial television rather than other media.

TMBG opened a Manchester office last September and, with a still in hand, chairman and chief executive Allan Rich is already talking to potential takeover targets to add research, teleworking and market database services to his portfolio. Stockbrokers Williams de Broe have just been appointed in order to try to interest more institutional shareholders.

They were already forecasting £1.71m for the year to April and earnings per share of 0.47p, figures they plan to revise upwards. Richard Dartington, however, has more modest earnings expectations of only about 0.38p. At between 15 and 18 times prospective earnings the tightly held shares look high enough

Airport shopping boosts BAA profits

Chris Goddard
Business Correspondent

The boom in airport shopping helped boost pre-tax profits at BAA, the privatised group which runs Heathrow, Gatwick and Stansted, by 6 per cent to £397m in the nine months to the end of December.

The figures confirm the increasing importance of retailing to BAA. Cash earned from shopping concessions in airport terminals surged by 10.9 per cent over the past nine months to £331m. Income from property also increased substantially, jumping 8.4 per cent to £169m.

Last summer Sir John Egan, BAA's chief executive, said the proportion of revenues accounted for by retailing had grown to 44.4 per cent, suggesting shopping could soon overtake the core airports business as the main cash generator. Yesterday's results emphasised this trend, with retailing accounting for more than 46 per cent of revenues.

In contrast, the group said revenues from its regulated airport and traffic charges had climbed by a more modest 5.5 per cent to £385m. BAA's airports, which also include Glasgow, handled 76.6 million passengers in the nine months to 31 December, a rise of 4.4 per cent.

Total revenues increased by 7.8 per cent to £1,064m, while operating profits rose by 9 per cent to £425m. BAA shares fell 6.5p to 525.5p.

Separately, it emerged yesterday that BAA had reduced its stake in a consortium set up to bid for a role in the privatisation of Australia's airports. The group had originally had a 49 per cent share in the venture, Australia Pacific Airports Corporation (Apac).

This will now drop to 29 per

cent in the hope that a more "Australian" feel to the group will have a better chance of winning the bidding. So far Apac has put in bids to run airports in Melbourne, Brisbane and Perth.

"We have been persuaded that our consortium is more likely to succeed with a higher level of Australian equity. However, the bid remains in all respects consistent with our international strategy, providing both the rate of return we seek and the opportunity to expand our experience of overseas airports," a BAA spokesman



Sir John Egan: Retailing of increasing importance

said yesterday.

However, BAA was still on its biggest current contest whether it will fall within remit of Labour's planned windfall tax on the private utilities.

In recent weeks BAA stepped up its lobbying clearer signals emerged in Labour that it would include tax in its first budget. Sources have suggested the bill would include a "wording covering all 'privatised utilities', that BAA insists its operations, no longer be included in category.

Gulf set to lift offer for Clyde

Tom Stevenson
City Editor

Gulf Canada is expected to come back with a bid worth about 120p for Clyde Petroleum today, the last time at which it can increase its existing 105p offer, which put a £432m price tag on the British company. Clyde's shares closed 2p higher at 117.5p last night as the market anticipated a modestly improved offer.

Gulf was in last-minute discussions with Deutsche Morgan Grenfell, its adviser, yesterday at which chief executive, JP Bryan, is understood to have argued against the sort of increase that might be required to gain the support of some of Clyde's largest shareholders. Some major investors have indicated privately that they would be unhappy to take less than 135p a share for the oil explorer.

The gap between the institutions' expectations and the likely reality of Gulf's final of-

fer sets the scene for two of heavy investor arm-twisting and opens the door for a possible knockout blow by white knight. It is expected to be a tense conclusion to has been an acrimonious

Tomorrow will also see launch a final attack on valuation methodology, main plank of its defence been an attempt to persuade shareholders that a "gold coin" value using its present cash flow valuation would put a price tag of company of up to 135p.

Gulf has consistently missed Clyde's numbers and insisted that its own 105p offer was a full and generous one.

During the bid both sides engaged independent oil industry consultants to add credibility to their claims, which increasingly focused on technical company valuation.

Those arguments are thought to have split Clyde's main holders.



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صكرا من الامم

business

Ten events that may shake the world by the turn of the century

"What," asked my friend, a thoughtful banker over from New York, "are the discontinuities - the really big surprises that we might face over the next three to five years?"

It is an interesting question and one far too seldom asked by people involved in the financial markets, and it seemed to me to deserve a better answer than the one I was able to manage over dinner on Saturday evening. Financial markets always focus on the short term, despite the fact that anyone buying a long-term government bond is making an implicit assumption about inflation, interest rates and currency movements a generation hence.

So here are some suggestions of possible shocks to the world economic system, or if not shocks, things which might make the first decade of the next century very different from the last decade of this one.

One - a switch in the pattern of strong and weak currencies. For the last 30 years there has been general pattern of currencies where the dollar, sterling and the lira tend to fall while the yen and the mark rise. People look now at the recovery of the dollar and pound and see this as a temporary upward blip on a downward general path. But that may be wrong. Both the Japanese and German economies, for all their virtues, appear relatively less strong than they did a generation ago, while the US appears stronger. Within Europe, both the UK and Italy have improved their relative performance, as the graph on productivity changes since 1979 would seem to show. So it is at least possible that the changes in the dollar and sterling are long term rather than short. Meanwhile, the difficulties of the yen may persist for some time, while the mark may even disappear if European Monetary Union (EMU) happens.

Two - a collapse of US share prices, dragging other equity

markets down with it. Not much can be added to the wealth of literature on this subject, except perhaps to say (a) that not enough work is being done of a "what if?" variety to see the sensitivity of the US economy to, say, a 30 per cent fall in share prices; and (b) that the sort of arguments being used to justify present prices will be familiar to anyone who visited Japan in the late 1980s, when share prices there were shooting up.

Three - serious social tension in continental Europe. So far most of the Continent has managed to contain social pressures, but continued slow growth and rising unemployment would put very great strains on the consensus. A discontinuity could take several forms - worse riots in France, the return of a right-wing nationalist government in Germany, maybe just more strikes across the Continent - but the end result would be pressure not just on things like the plan for EMU but on the whole concept of the European Union.

Four - might the EU itself either break up or be transformed into something more akin to a free-trade association? My own view is that this sort of outcome, if it takes place, is 15 or 20 years away rather than on the three-to-five year timescale. But even if one puts EU break-up as a low possibility, it ought to be on the map.



Hamish McRae

Russia and Eastern Europe may become the most vibrant part of the European economy. Already Poland and Hungary are growing rapidly

Five - the coming Russian boom. The idea here is that Russia and the whole of Eastern Europe will become the most vibrant part of the European economy even if the EU does not strike the problems catalogued in shocks three and

four above. Already Poland, Hungary and the Czech Republic are growing rapidly by Western European standards and once take-off is established in Russia the economic balance of Europe will shift east in a dramatic way.

Six - a corresponding change in the balance of economic power in the third world. Power will shift from early leaders, in particular Japan but also South Korea, Hong Kong and Taiwan. It will move to mainland China, Indonesia and India. It has long been apparent that the big population countries will tend to gain power vis-à-vis the smaller ones. Maybe in the next five years the pace of change will suddenly accelerate.

Seven - leading on from that, really serious disruption in Japan. The most likely outcome for Japan may well be a long, slow pull out of recession, with stagnant living standards as the society ages, but it is very easy to outline a worse outcome, where economic depression was accompanied by political upheaval.

Eight - the next commodity price shock. Three years - no, three months - before the first oil shock in 1973 it would have been hardly conceivable that the oil price could quadruple in a few weeks. A sharp rise in commodity prices looks similarly unlikely at the moment, but it would not be difficult to

sketch the main scenario which would push oil prices sharply up: conflict in the Middle East. And other scenarios could push up the price of other basic products including food.

Nine - a technical advance which will transform competitive advantage. The obvious candidate is the transformation of telecommunications: the sudden plunge in costs that is taking place right now, and the equally sudden surge in the capability of the networked computer. We still think in terms of country competitiveness, and all the notes above are framed in that language. But maybe the language is wrong, as individuals who earn their living with a computer can base themselves anywhere in the world and sell their output instantly anywhere in the world too. Maybe this technical revolution will transform corporations in a way which we still cannot see, but which will become evident over the next five years.

And 10? That must surely be the "R" word, Recession. It is almost impossible for anyone to see recession coming. You could scan everything that has been written in the press, or spoken by business and political leaders, in the run-up to previous recessions and see no warnings at all that they were aware of what was about to hit them. At the moment there is widespread talk, at least in the US, that the business cycle no longer exists. But at some stage in the future there will be another global recession. It may be several years off; it may be a mild recession; it may not be synchronised, so some countries may be going down while others are still rising. But it is going to happen. Question: will it happen in our time-frame above, the next three-to-five years?

Well, there are 10 ideas of possible shocks. Most will not happen. But there is a powerful case for carrying out the "what if?" exercise, if only because a shock which has been at least partly foreseen is a less dramatic shock when it strikes.

A labrador is retired man's best friend

PEOPLE & BUSINESS



Albert Scardino: Found Nottingham quite hood free

David Redding, chief press spokesman at Ofstel since 1984, retired from the telecoms regulator on Friday, and by all accounts his leaving bash was quite an occasion.

Guests included Bryan Carsberg, former Ofstel head, as well as the present incumbent, Don Cruickshank.

Notably absent, however, was Mr Redding's leaving present. He had requested a golden labrador, no doubt fearing retirement would weigh heavily on his mind. A pooch would get him out of the house at the very least.

The good news is that Ofstel is determined to buy such a dog for him, but hasn't quite got round to it yet. Mr Redding is on a three-week holiday, giving Ofstel time to do so. So if you spot Mr Cruickshank hanging around Battersea Dogs' Home, you'll know why.

Albert Scardino, husband of Marjorie Scardino, Pearson's recently installed chief executive, had a worrying trip to Nottingham last week. The American-born Mr Scardino is leading one of the groups bidding for Nottingham Forest. He was mortified to discover, then, as he was driving back from a trip to Nottingham, that he had left his laptop computer and a pile of confidential documents on the pavement where he had parked his car.

When he got back to London he rang the police, who scooted around to the spot he described - to find the laptop, documents and all, just where he had left them on the pavement. These were returned to a mighty relieved Mr Scardino. But what does it say about the citizens of Nottingham? Scrupulously honest - or short of sight?

Eddie George, Governor of the Bank of England, is taking on the Office of National Statistics in a bare-knuckle fight for market share in the publishing business.

For years the ONS has published a monthly digest

Morgan in 1978 and spent six years in their oil and gas corporate finance team in London and New York. He moved to Morgan Stanley in 1984, where he rose to become head of European equities.

David Perry, the man who successfully defended Waddington against hostile bids from Robert Maxwell, is retiring as chairman after nearly 20 years with the packaging and printing company. Mr Perry, 59, is being succeeded by Michael Orr, chairman of Molins, the Milton Keynes-based engineering group. Mr Orr is also a non-executive director of Granada, Lazard, and WH Smith.

Mr Perry joined as managing director of Waddington in 1978, when it still owned the Monopoly board game and manufactured playing cards.

Nowadays the company has given up cards in favour of producing mailshots for the building societies which are converting to bank status, as well as American fast food containers.

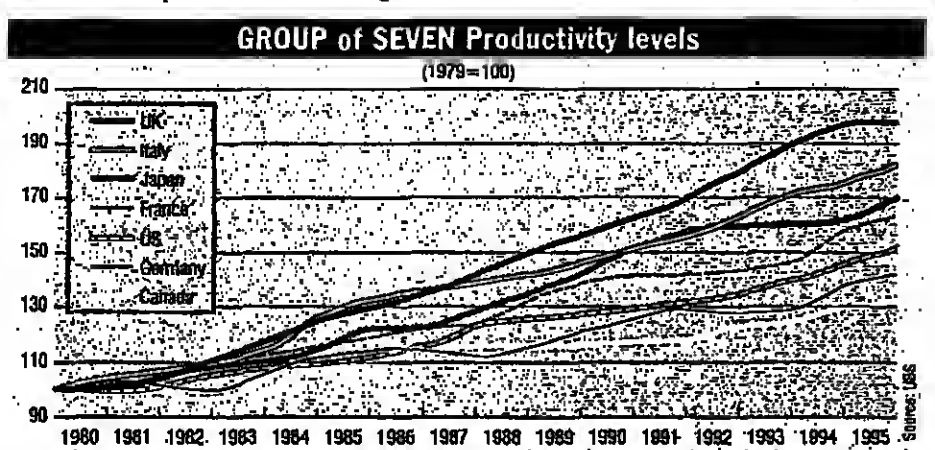
Mr Perry retains his links with the world of cards as he is still a member of the Worshipful Company of Masters of Playing Cards.

Before joining Waddington Mr Perry worked for Mr Maxwell at British Printing. Nevertheless, he managed to repel a long, drawn-out bid battle with Mr Maxwell for Waddington in 1983, and a renewed attack one year later.

In 1988 Mr Perry became chief executive, and three years ago the company sold the rights to Monopoly. Chairman for just over two years, Mr Perry in his youth won 15 caps playing rugby for England.

Sadly he was unavailable for comment yesterday on England's demolition of Scotland on Saturday, since he is on a skiing holiday.

John Willcock



Foreign Exchange Rates

Country	Spot	1 month	3 months	D-Mark	Spot	1 month	3 months
US	167.19	10.4	30.72	1000	0.0097		
Canada	2.957	54.48	134.36	24.23	75.73		
Germany	2.6481	69.61	154.29	30.28	90.97		
France	2.4801	71.3	160.00	31.00	92.59		
Italy	2.654	25.40	46.67	162.12	27.28	56.61	
Japan	168.28	95.91	211.26	127.77	145.14		
Australia	1.3897	21.38	15.21	17.83	15.14	44.43	
Belgium	54.835	16.10	42.36	33.84	7.5	20.17	
Denmark	100.23	22.22	67.55	35.56	38.78	286.24	
Netherlands	2.9789	82.25	240.28	184.56	38.27	121.33	
Ireland	101.3	5.1	10.10	159.40	6.3	10.4	
Norway	2.0483	160.90	380.20	50.25	18.89		
Spain	223.05	10.03	13.03	107.32	10.7	10.7	
Sweden	117.31	20.90	69.58	228.03	41.38	152.10	
Switzerland	2.2902	85.76	233.28	143.08	40.37	181.14	
Australia	2.2308	15.38	15.38	1.3045	14.33	33.35	
Hong Kong	12.932	93.52	240.83	7.908	2.4	2.7	
Malaysia	4.0061	0.0	0.0	2.4853	27.30	89.85	
New Zealand	2.2430	64.71	55.88	145.23	97.89	188.40	
Saudi Arabia	60.533	0.0	0.0	3.7504	1.4	5.9	
Singapore	2.2704	0.0	0.0	1.4065	24.13	70.85	

Other Spot Rates

Country	Sterling	Dollar	Country	Sterling	Dollar
Argentina	16122	0.9399	Nigeria	128798	0.0480
Austria	136350	1.5093	Oman	26205	0.0350
Brazil	10252	0.4050	Pakistan	64.036	0.0078
China	3.718	8.2331	Philippines	42.830	26.370
India	34.670	3.3551	Romania	265.307	0.0038
Indonesia	17.889	4.8926	Russia	90.922	0.0030
Iran	47.075	2.7320	S. Africa	12.201	0.0078
Israel	57.889	35.700	Taiwan	44.276	27.490
Kuwait	0.478	0.0205	UAE	3.9322	3.6735

Forward rates quoted high to low are at a discount, subtract from spot rate. Rate quoted low to high are at a premium, add to spot rate.

*Dollar rates quoted as reciprocals. For the latest foreign exchange rates call 0891 133 3033.

Costs less 50p per minute (day rate) 45p other times

Interest Rates

UK	Germany	US	Japan
Base Rate	5.00%	Discount	5.00%
Bank of England	Discount	Prime	Discount
3 months	3.75%	3 months	Discount
6 months	3.75%	6 months	Discount
1 year	3.75%	1 year	Discount
2 years	3.75%	2 years	Discount
3 years	3.75%	3 years	Discount
4 years	3.75%	4 years	Discount
5 years	3.75%	5 years	Discount

Bond Yields

Country	5yr yield %	10yr yield %	Country	5yr yield %	10yr yield %
UK	7.1%	7.1%	Netherlands	6.7%	6.7%
Germany	5.7%	6.0%	Spain	6.4%	6.4%
France	5.7%	6.0%	Italy	6.2%	6.2%
Italy	6.1%	6.1%	Belgium	5.4%	5.4%
Japan	5.7%	5.7%	Sweden	4.4%	4.4%
Australia	6.1%	6.1%	Switzerland	4.4%	4.4%
Canada	6.1%	6.1%	USA	6.1%	6.1%

Money Market Rates

Instrument	7 Day	1 Month	3 Months	1 Year
Interbank	5.7%	6.1%	6.1%	6.1%
Sterling CDs	5.7%	6.1%	6.1%	6.1%
Discount Market	5.7%	6.1%	6.1%	6.1%
Treasury Bills	5.7%	6.1%	6.1%	6.1%
EU Libor	5.7%	6.1%	6.1%	6.1%

Tourist Rates

£ Buys	£ Buys	£ Buys	
Australia	2.0370	France	6.8000
Austria	1.7900	Germany	2.5575
Belgium	50.5000	Italy	2.5575
Canada	0.7650	Netherlands	0.7650
Cyprus	2.0370	Spain	2.5575
Denmark	7.1700	Sweden	1.7900
Holland	2.5575	Switzerland	2.5575
Japan	1.7900	USA	0.7650
Malta	0.7650	UK	1.7900
Portugal	2.5575		
South Africa	2.5575		
Taiwan	2.5575		
UAE	3.9322		

Life Financial Futures

Contract	Settlement	High/Low	Est/Cont	Open
Long Oil	11.23	11.23	11.23	11.23
Short Oil	11.23	11.23	11.23	11.23
Long Gas	11.23	11.23	11.23	11.23
Short Gas	11.23	11.23	11.23	11.23
Long Euro	11.23	11.23	11.23	11.23
Short Euro	11.23	11.23	11.23	11.23

Life FTSE Index Option

Series	4200	4300	4400	4500
Call	4200	4300	4400	4500
Put	4200	4300	4400	4500
Call	4200	4300	4400	4500
Put	4200	4300	4400	4500

Energy

WTI	21.25	21.25	21.25
WTI	21.25	21.25	21.25
WTI	21.25	21.25	21.25

Commodity Indices

Index	Value	Index	Value
Agri	100.00	Metals	100.00
Energy	100.00	Grains	100.00
Metals	100.00	Softs	100.00
Grains	100.00	Indices	100.00

Latest Unit Trust Prices

Unit	Price	Unit	Price
Unit 1	1.00	Unit 2	1.00
Unit 3	1.00	Unit 4	1.00
Unit 5	1.00	Unit 6	1.00
Unit 7	1.00	Unit 8	1.00

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Industrial Metals

Aluminum	11.23	11.23	11.23
Aluminum	11.23	11.23	11.23
Aluminum	11.23	11.23	11.23
Aluminum	11.23	11.23	11.23

Precious Metals

Gold	11.23	11.23	11.23
Gold	11.23	11.23	11.23
Gold	11.23	11.23	11.23
Gold	11.23	11.23	11.23

Agricultural

Wheat	11.23	11.23	11.23
Wheat	11.23	11.23	11.23
Wheat	11.23	11.23	11.23
Wheat	11.23	11.23	11.23

Other Softs

Wool	11.23	11.23	11.23
Wool	11.23	11.23	11.23
Wool	11.23	11.23	11.23
Wool	11.23	11.23	11.23

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Troph

Boi

WARWICK

CARLISLE

INGFIELD



Some of English football's most famous grounds will disappear under the bulldozer this summer. In the first of an occasional series, **Phil Shaw** meets Stoke City's favourite son who recalls the great days of the Victoria Ground



Photograph: David Ashdown

هكذا من الاصل

The Antipodean countries may produce fine teams. But they certainly seem to come up with some lamentable referees

Last Saturday, before setting off for Cardiff, I was about to telephone the bookmaker with a double on Wales and England. Then I hesitated and withdrew. I had a doubt: not about whether Wales would beat Ireland, which I thought they would manage fairly easily, but about whether England would beat Scotland.

Those who simply read scores or confine their viewing to the excerpts shown on television news may think my judgement was more than usually awry. Having looked at the video after my return from Wales, I am not ashamed. The match might easily have gone the other way.

This is not to detract from the English performance. Will Carling, as everyone has written, had a marvellous game. It is a great pity,

though understandable enough, that he is not making himself available for the Lions in South Africa. Richard Hill may have solved the open-side problem which has puzzled England since the retirement of Peter Winterbottom. The English forwards are formidable, though Martin Johnson and Simon Shaw are not yet quite the force in the line-out that everyone expected them to be.

Nevertheless, the Scots might have won: if Rowen Shepherd had kicked a fairly easy penalty, so bringing his side to within three points; if Rob Wainwright had been allowed a perfectly good try; and if the referee, Paddy O'Brien of New Zealand, had not awarded England an undeserved penalty try. O'Brien cannot be blamed for disallowing

Wainwright's effort. On television - showing that the camera really can lie after all - it looked doubtful from the back, where O'Brien was positioned, but unquestionably from the front. After the match, moreover, Wainwright himself said on television that he did not know for certain whether he had scored.

The award of the penalty try, was by contrast, indefensible. If backs encroach for the first time, which is all the Scots did, the correct course is to award a kick at goal. I had previously thought that the fashion for penalty tries, inaugurated by Tony Spreadbury at the Oxford v Cambridge match a couple of seasons ago, was confined to the Courage First and Second Divisions. Now that the contagion has spread to the Five Nations' Championship, it is sur-



ALAN WATKINS

ly time for drastic remedial action to be taken by means of clear instructions to referees. Alas, my suspicion is, on the contrary, they have been instructed to award as many penalty tries as they can. The Antipodean countries may produce fine teams and accom-

plished players. But they certainly seem to come up with some lamentable referees. At Cardiff the performance of Wayne Erickson of Australia was only a slight improvement on O'Brien's at Twickenham.

Here is an example: an Irish player almost took Robert Howley's head off with a dangerous tackle - another area that needs to be sorted out - between the Welsh 22 and half-way line. Howley survived, and Wales progressed to the Irish 22. At this point a touch-judge intervened to inform the referee of the offence which had been committed several minutes previously. He whistled up, brought Wales back nearly 50 yards and Neil Jenkins found touch. What on earth was the point of that?

Still, it was an exciting match. Fifty years ago rugby coaches warned their young charges against becoming muscle-bound. Being muscle-bound was, it appeared, even more perilous than being a weakling. Even excessive hiking could, we were assured, lead to this distressing condition in the legs. As for "body building", which it was called at the time, why, that was little short of a sexual perversion.

All that changed sometime in the 1960s, when "weights" became not only respectable but essential for a rugby player. Since then the process has accelerated. Today's players are fitter, faster and stronger. This is why compiling a Lions XV since 1971, or whatever the game may be, though agreeable entertainment for a winter's evening, is ultimately

a futile exercise. Certainly the forwards, and probably the backs, of 25 years ago could not live with their successors today.

And yet... and yet... the level of skill has unquestionably diminished. The number of times someone from the Welsh front five knicked on or spilled the ball could not easily be counted. The Irish proved only slightly more accurate. In the English side, it is a minor miracle when Tim Rodber manages to hang on to anything.

Even the handling of such a gifted Scottish back as Gregor Townsend is suspect. These faults are easy enough to remedy. All that is needed is a little practice. Accordingly my message for the week is: stop pumping iron and start catching balls.

Richardson broadside for Brittle

Rugby Union
CHRIS HEWITT

If revolutionaries inevitably end up devouring their own, they lose nothing in the appetite department to dyed-in-the-wool traditionalists like John Richardson, the affable president of the Rugby Football Union. Richardson yesterday reached the end of his tether with the antics of his own executive chairman, Cliff Brittle, effectively telling him either to shut up or step down.

It was the second time in less than a week that Richardson, frustrated by his colleague's on-going campaign to discredit the RFU's agreement with its senior clubs, felt the need to fire a public shot across the bows of the Good Ship Brittle. This one was more of a cannonball than a bullet, however.

"I am sad that Cliff, after all he has done, feels it proper to publish his criticism of a decision democratically taken after lengthy debate," said the president, adding pointedly that the full RFU committee ratified the peace deal by 50 votes to four at their meeting last Thursday night.

The RFU committee asked Cliff to consider his position. Members were prepared to agree to his request for further

time for deliberation, trusting that he would stop publicly criticising and challenging decisions democratically reached by the governing body. It would appear from his recent actions that his position as chairman of the executive and officer of the union is becoming less and less tenable.

Richardson and his colleagues were last night awaiting a response from the chairman, who has threatened to call a Special General Meeting to challenge the accord with the clubs.

Away from the political arena, Wasp's completed the signing of the strong-running centre Rob Henderson from London Irish - a shrewd investment, given Damian Hopley's long-term injury problems and Va'anga Tu'itama's return to rugby league. Henderson, capped twice by Ireland, has negotiated a release from his contract with the Exiles and moves across the capital in a four-year deal.

"London Irish was like a second home to me, but I was becoming stale," Henderson said yesterday. "This is an exciting opportunity and I am sure to help me gain a regular place in the Ireland team."

The Wasps director of rugby, Nigel Melville, said: "Rob is exactly the type of strong, attacking player we need."



Aile Skaardal heads for a second successive super-giant slalom world title yesterday Photograph: Paul Hanna/Reuters

Surprise success for Skaardal

Skiing

Aile Skaardal, a surprise winner of the super-giant slalom at last year's World Championships, retained his title in Sestriere yesterday, but again his success was unexpected.

"If this is true, it's not a dream, I don't think I'll survive today. It's crazy," said Skaardal, who has not won a World Cup race all season although he finished second in downhill in Chamonix and Val Gardena.

Yesterday Skaardal, who made

his World Championship debut in Bormio in 1985, sped down the Italian piste in 1min 29.68sec to beat his compatriot Lasse Kjus, the overall World Cup holder, who has been unfit for much of this World Cup because of flu. He clocked 1:29.68, edging out the Austrian veteran Günther Mader. Hans Knauss, Austria's young hope, who won a super-G in Val d'Isère in December, missed a medal by 0.06sec.

Skaardal, starting fifth in bright sunshine on the Kandahar-Banchetta piste that last hosted a major race in 1989

when Luxembourg's Marc Girardelli suffered a serious accident, added paid for taking an aggressive line, nearly falling on the upper part of the course.

Kjus, the seventh starter, was the fastest through two intermediates before slowing slightly. He was almost as stunned as Skaardal to be among the medalists but he said his form and confidence had been improving since he returned to the circuit on 14 January.

Mader, who was second in one of only two super-Gs tried this season, completed a trio of

surprised medalists with his first super-G medal. It was the sixth bronze, to add to one silver, that he has accumulated during his world and Olympic career.

There was disappointment for the French, Italians and Swiss who had high hopes of a medal. France's Luc Alphand, who won the super-G in Laax last week, was left out of the top 10 and said he had a bad cold.

Britain's Graham Bell made a number of mistakes and finished 41st, three places behind the championship debutant, Andrew Freshwater.

'Clean' McCall ready to face drugs test

Boxing

Oliver McCall was warned to expect a drugs test soon after his arrival in Las Vegas yesterday for his vacant World Boxing Council heavyweight title showdown against Lennox Lewis.

McCall has recently undergone his third drugs rehabilitation programme, but stresses that he is "clean and sober" before Friday's rematch at the Las Vegas Hilton. "If the WBC don't test him, then we will as soon as he arrives in town," Marc Ratner, of the Nevada State Athletic Commission, said.

"Lennox will not be tested, but fighters like McCall, who have had a problem in the past, we check out. We are not suspicious of Oliver, but these things need to be done. It's no secret what we are doing. Both men will have to take a test after the fight under our rules and the WBC's."

Frank Maloney, Lewis's manager, said: "The drug rumours don't worry Lennox. We think they may be a ploy to hush him into a false sense of security. We are not going to be fooled by it. We are convinced McCall will be in the best shape of his life."

McCall took Lewis's WBC crown at Wembley Arena in September 1994, winning by a shock second-round stoppage. After successfully defending

the title against Larry Holmes, McCall returned to Wembley, only for Frank Bruno to take his title.

"It was before the Bruno fight that I had my first encounter with drugs rehabilitation," McCall said. "I failed. I went about it incorrectly. I was going to the clinic as an out-patient, I should have signed on full-time."

"The drugs and alcohol outside overpowered me. I wasn't able to sustain myself. This time I've controlled myself. I'm clean and sober and I'm training well. Drugs and alcohol are a disease. I can't control the disease, but I'm making myself responsible for my recovery."

"If I slip again, there can be no excuses. I hope I get sympathy from the streets. I have a wife and six children and want to raise my family properly."

Naseem Hamed's manager, Brendan Ingle, has dropped his objection to the appointment of an American referee, Rudy Battle, for Saturday's featherweight unification bout against Tom "Boom Boom" Johnson. Ingle last week demanded Battle be replaced by a neutral referee. "I didn't think it was fair having an American in charge," Ingle said. "But Naseem isn't bothered who they put in and said not to worry about it. The matter is now dead and gone."

Hunter never in hunt

Snooker

Mark Williams eased into the second round of the Benson and Hedges Masters at Wembley with a 5-1 victory over Paul Hunter yesterday. Williams was below his top form but still far too good for his opponent, who received a wild-card invitation from the spec sors.

Hunter failed to show why he is widely regarded as the sport's leading teenager. The 18-year-old from Leeds had his only success with a break of 79 in the third frame and later admitted

to being overawed by the venue. Hunter's cause, however, was not helped when an outrageous fluted blue, ensued a 2-0 lead for Williams.

Hunter reduced his deficit to 3-2 in the fifth frame, but having compiled a 60 break, he missed a simple black and Williams took the frame with an excellent clearance to go 4-1 ahead. That proved the final blow for Hunter, as Williams, now the provisional world No 3 after reaching the semi-finals of the Regal Welsh Open, comfortably won the sixth frame to complete victory.

Rusedski on the rise

Tennis

Greg Rusedski has jumped 17 places in the latest ATP world rankings after reaching the final of the Croatian Indoor Championship in Zagreb.

Rusedski, beaten 7-6, 4-6, 7-6 by the world No 2, Goran Ivanisevic, in Sunday's final, yesterday rose from 56 to 39 and is now only six places below his highest

ever ranking - 33 - which he achieved in January last year.

The British No 1, Tim Henman, has dropped one place from 16 to 17 despite resting last week. In the same week last year he reached the Shanghai Open semi-finals and now loses the ranking points he gained there.

Henman next plays in the Dubai Open, starting on 10 February. Rusedski is at the Sybase Open in San Jose that week.

American football

Pete Carroll, the defensive coordinator of the San Francisco 49ers, has signed a five-year contract to be the head coach of the New England Patriots, succeeding Bill Parcells who resigned last week. In 1994 Carroll was the head coach of the New York Jets.

Daytona 247 (third day of four): Aile Skaardal (NOR) 1:29.68, 2nd Lasse Kjus (NOR) 1:30.74, 3rd Günther Mader (AUT) 1:31.00, 4th Hans Knauss (AUT) 1:31.06, 5th Luc Alphand (FRA) 1:31.10, 6th Rudy Battle (USA) 1:31.15, 7th Andrew Freshwater (GBR) 1:31.20, 8th Mark Williams (WAL) 1:31.25, 9th Paul Hunter (WAL) 1:31.30, 10th Simon Shaw (ENG) 1:31.35, 11th Martin Johnson (ENG) 1:31.40, 12th Simon Shaw (ENG) 1:31.45, 13th Simon Shaw (ENG) 1:31.50, 14th Simon Shaw (ENG) 1:31.55, 15th Simon Shaw (ENG) 1:31.60, 16th Simon Shaw (ENG) 1:31.65, 17th Simon Shaw (ENG) 1:31.70, 18th Simon Shaw (ENG) 1:31.75, 19th Simon Shaw (ENG) 1:31.80, 20th Simon Shaw (ENG) 1:31.85, 21st Simon Shaw (ENG) 1:31.90, 22nd Simon Shaw (ENG) 1:31.95, 23rd Simon Shaw (ENG) 1:32.00, 24th Simon Shaw (ENG) 1:32.05, 25th Simon Shaw (ENG) 1:32.10, 26th Simon Shaw (ENG) 1:32.15, 27th Simon Shaw (ENG) 1:32.20, 28th Simon Shaw (ENG) 1:32.25, 29th Simon Shaw (ENG) 1:32.30, 30th Simon Shaw (ENG) 1:32.35, 31st Simon Shaw (ENG) 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